



# *First Press*

**HAPPY ADVENT AND MERRY CHRISTMAS**  
DECEMBER 2014 ISSUE • FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS





# NOTES FOR THE JOURNEY

BY REV. JOHN SEIDERS • EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Dear Friends at FPC:

In a few short weeks we will be celebrating Christmas! When I was a child and a teenager, the days of waiting for Christmas never seemed to end. But as an adult, there never seem to be enough days to prepare for Christmas. It is funny how things change, isn't it?

I wonder if the people in Bethlehem were ready for the birth of Jesus Christ? People waited a long time for the Messiah, the Savior of the World. Elizabeth and Zechariah waited, and were caught by surprise in their old age by the news that they would be parents (Luke 1:11-25). I am not sure that they were ready. Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married and caught by surprise by the news that they would be par-

ents (Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25). I am not sure that they were ready. The inn was full (Luke 2:7) and innkeeper couldn't provide a room for the child who would become king. I am not sure he was ready.

Think about things on the world stage for a moment. Herod wasn't ready for a king to be born. In fact, when he learned of the birth of another king he issued orders to "kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who where two years old and under" (Matthew 2:16). The religious leaders of the day were looking for a Messiah, but they were not happy with what they heard from Jesus – especially when Jesus' statements were not what they expected. I am not sure they were ready either.

What about us? Are we ready for the birth of Jesus Christ? I am not talking about buying and giving gifts, but ready to welcome him in our hearts and our lives. When Jesus shows up there always seems to be something that is unexpected. Whether it is his presence, his power, his words, or his silence, we never quite seem to be ready. In fact, there isn't really any way that we can be prepared.

But we wait. The season of Advent is a season in which we wait. We wait because we are expectant. We wait because that is what the people of God did for centuries. As they waited for the Messiah to come, we wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to come again.

And so, we wait. We wait for the unexpected because we want to experience the unexpected grace, mercy, and love that only he can bring.

That is something I do not want to miss. That is something I cannot afford to miss. I hope it is the same for you.

Peace,

John

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# SAVE THE DATE



## CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS AT THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Get ready for the annual First Presbyterian Church Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 7! The Christmas Pageant is a time for children, their families, and the congregation to celebrate Jesus' birth. The 5th graders will have the main roles of Mary, Joseph, Gabriel, the Magi and many more. The younger grades will be the supporting roles of angels, shepherds, stars, sheep and mice! The pageant will be during the 11:00 a.m. traditional worship service December 7. Bring family and friends to enjoy as the children of FPC tell the story of the birth of our Lord and Savior!

### ACCESS TO FIRST PRES MIGHT BE INHIBITED

December 7  
Please note that the Rock and Roll Marathon is scheduled to take place that morning and will likely affect your commute to First Pres. From what we can tell, the McCullough exit from 281/37 South will be open because McCullough, Avenue E, 4th Street, and North Alamo will be open. However, Nolan, Bonham, and North Alamo from 4th Street westward will be closed. We suggest you visit [www.runrocknroll.competitor.com](http://www.runrocknroll.competitor.com) and consult the course map for San Antonio.

DECEMBER 7, 2014

## PARENTS DAY OUT

Children's Ministry is hosting. The cost will be \$10 per child or \$20 maximum per family for ages birth thru 5th grade. RSVP to Sonya Wright at [sonyaw@fpcsat.org](mailto:sonyaw@fpcsat.org), with your child's name and age.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13 • 10:00 AM-2:30 PM

## FUNDRAISER FOR THE CHURCH CHILDREN'S CENTER

On March 28, 2015 First Presbyterian Church will be hosting the second annual fundraiser for the First Presbyterian Church Children's Center. This promises to be a fun evening of food, wine, music and fellowship, all for a good cause. The evening is open to all church members, school families, and their guests. More details will follow.

MARCH 28, 2015 • FPC

## WELCOME TO OUR WORLD CHRISTMAS EVE AT FIRST PRES

SERVICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER 3:00 p.m. • Sanctuary	FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE 5:00 p.m. • Sanctuary
TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP SERVICE 7:00 & 9:00 p.m. • Sanctuary	CONTEMPORARY CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00 p.m. • Westminster Hall

Overflow seating available in Westminster Hall for 3:00, 5:00, 7:00 & 9:00 p.m. • Childcare available (2 mos.-5 yrs.)

DECEMBER 24, 2014

## FOOD TRUCK IS BACK IN DECEMBER

Food Truck is back over Christmas break for college students! This is a great time to reconnect with friends that you haven't seen since the summer, AND enjoy a great meal. So mark your calendars for dinnertime on December 21 and 28, as well as January 4. Also, be sure to check the First Presbyterian Church University and Young Adults Facebook page for specific times and locations. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Chris Via ([chrisv@fpcsat.org](mailto:chrisv@fpcsat.org)). See you there!

DECEMBER 21, 28, & JANUARY 4



## MUSIC FOR THE HOLIDAYS

### MIDDAY NOELS CONCERT SERIES

A SEASONAL CELEBRATION OF MERRY MELODIES AND HOLIDAY HARMONIES  
THURSDAYS, DECEMBER 4, 11, AND 18, 2014 • 12:10-12:45 PM • SANCTUARY

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

SHIMMERING SOUNDS AND SPARKLING SINGING  
The UTSA Chamber Choir  
Thursday, December 4

TRANSCENDENT TRANSCRIPTIONS  
Thursday, December 18  
Featuring Dr. Jae Ha on the organ

DIXIELAND JINGLES  
Thursday, December 11  
New-Orleans-style jazz

### GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

MUSIC FROM THE VIVALDI GLORIA  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2014 • 9:30 & 11:00 AM • TRADITIONAL WORSHIP

Our Sanctuary Choir and String Quartet present music from the 'Gloria' of Antonio Vivaldi during both Traditional worship services.

### CHRISTMAS EVE AT FIRST

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2014 • 7:00 & 9:00 PM • TRADITIONAL WORSHIP

Join us on Christmas Eve for one of our five diverse worship service offerings. Each service is infused with beautiful musical offerings, including extensive choir and brass prelude music before our 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. traditional candlelight services.

### NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR SACRED MUSIC

JANUARY 7-9, 2015

First Presbyterian Church plays host to church musicians from around the country that will be participating in events to encourage and inform leaders of music ministry. We invite you to participate through two public events:

#### OPENING CONFERENCE WORSHIP

Wednesday, January 7, 2015 • 6:30 p.m.  
In the Sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church featuring the FPC Chamber Singers

#### FESTIVAL CONCERT

Friday, January 9, 2015 • 7:30 p.m.  
In the Sanctuary of First Baptist Church, 515 McCullough Avenue.  
A concert featuring a combined choir from First Presbyterian, First Baptist, and conference attendees, all under the direction of renowned conductor and composer, Dr. Z. Randall Stroope.





## GIFTS TO THE CHURCH: HOW IT WORKS BY BUTCH GERFERS, CHURCH TREASURER

Last year, the Session adopted a **Master Policy Governing Gifts to the Church**. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for receiving and processing gifts given to First Presbyterian Church (FPC). Its primary objectives are to assure appropriate acknowledgment to every donor, appropriate internal recognition of each gift, and application of each gift in accord with the wishes of the donor.

The Church Business Manager is responsible to the Stewardship & Finance Committee (S&F) for recommending either formal acceptance or rejection by the church of any gift, and assuring that an appropriate and timely response is made to the giver. The acceptance of any gift is subject to the Gift Acceptance Policy. The wishes of the donors of restricted gifts are to be honored without exception. The Church Business Manager is responsible for assuring adherence to this policy. Below are definitions that are helpful in understanding the policy:

- **Gift:** Any contribution to the church in the form of cash, securities or property. A gift can be unrestricted or restricted.

- **Unrestricted Gift:** Any gift that is not accompanied by restrictions on its use.
- **Restricted Gift:** A gift whose use is restricted by the donor. A restriction can be temporary or permanent.
- **Temporarily restricted gifts** are restricted for a specific purpose or for use within a specific time period.
- **Permanently restricted gifts** are best known as “endowments.” Funds received from donors stipulating that the principal must be maintained in perpetuity, and the earnings may be used for a specific purpose.
- **Memorial Gift:** A gift given in remembrance of a deceased person, and can be unrestricted or restricted.

A donor’s restriction is a legal and moral obligation; restricted gifts (both temporary and permanent) may not be “unrestricted” by the church. If the Session determines that the restriction cannot be honored, the gift should be returned or the donor contacted and approached with the option to change the restriction. Any changes approved by a donor must be fully documented and the document retained in the permanent financial records of the church.

FPC has two general categories for gifts received by the church: **Current Operating Fund** and **Special Fund**. The Current Operating Fund consists of expendable resources that are available for general church operations. The Special Fund is a fund group that presents designated, temporarily restricted and permanently restricted resources. Unrestricted gifts that are not given as bequests or memorials will be deposited into the Operating Budget. The S&F Committee receives a monthly report listing all the Special Fund Accounts and amounts.

In order to easily administer the distribution of funds and to establish a clear process to ensure that donor restrictions are followed, the church has adopted the following categories within “Special Funds” to which gifts will be accepted:

- **Unrestricted Bequests/Estates:** These gifts are accompanied by no restrictions.
- **Temporarily Restricted - Ministry and Missions:** These gifts have a general restriction to be used for ministry and/or missions purposes.
- **Temporarily Restricted - Property:** These gifts have a

general restriction to be used for remodeling, maintenance or new construction of the church property.

- **Permanently Restricted - Ministry and Missions:** The principal of these gifts is permanently restricted by the donor and only the earnings can be used for ministry and/or missions purposes.
- **Permanently Restricted - Property:** The principal of these gifts is permanently restricted by the donor and only the earnings can be used for remodeling, maintenance or new construction of the church property.

**NOTE:** The church retains the right to determine if gifts given for the purpose of ministry are used for ministry programs or for ministry facilities.

If you have questions or would like to know more about Master Policy Governing Gifts to the Church or the Church’s Special Funds, please contact Janet Slayden, Church Business Manager, at 210-271-2751, or Butch Gerfers, Church Treasurer, at 210-862-9998.





## TRUNK OR TREAT WAS A TREAT FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES

On Wednesday, October 29, the FPC small parking lot on Ave. E was transformed into a Trunk or Treat wonderland! FPC Children's Ministry hosted the annual Trunk or Treat event for kids of all ages and their families. Among the sights to be seen at Trunk or Treat was the wonderful world of Wizard of Oz including Dorothy, Toto, the Tin Woman and the Scarecrow! We also had a Spurs trunk, A&M Football trunk, Golf trunk, Fishing trunk, Crazy Cat Lady trunk, Fall trunk, and a Fire Fighter trunk. The kids went from trunk to trunk and played a

game for a chance to win candy, prizes and even a special soda at one trunk! The kids also had the opportunity to meet Elsa, Olaf, Sven, and Kristoff at the Frozen trunk and they tried to win candy by throwing snowballs at a snowman! Kids came dressed in their Halloween costumes and we had everything from Superheroes to Cleopatra!

Many groups from around the church volunteered to host a trunk and provide a fun opportunity for the kids and families to play and get to know one another better. Children's Ministry would like to thank all those who participated and helped to make this a memorable event for the children of FPC!



## FAMILY MISSIONS | BRAND NEW MISSION OPPORTUNITY: FAMILY MISSION TRIP TO THE TEXAS BORDER

First Presbyterian Church San Antonio is excited to announce a brand new opportunity for families to explore missional discipleship together in a meaningful, safe, and fun way: a FAMILY MISSION TRIP!

We are offering a family mission trip for kids who are currently in 3rd grade or older and their families. First Pres will serve in Harlingen, Texas, March 6-10, 2015, which is Friday through the following Tuesday morning.

“This is a chance for the entire First Pres family to serve together in awesome fellowship,” says Matt Fricker, Director of Youth Ministry. “There will be numerous serving opportunities for families, including construction, teaching VBS, or leading a backyard Bible study. We will also be in community with other churches, with whom we will be able to worship throughout the mission trip.”

Matt says this will be “a great opportunity to serve together as a family and invite others along to be the hands and feet of Jesus this Spring Break.”

The price of the trip is only \$100 if you sign up by December 31, or \$125 late registration by February 1. If you have any questions, please contact Matt at [mattf@fpcsat.org](mailto:mattf@fpcsat.org).

MATT FRICKER, DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY



## GLOBAL MISSIONS | IS GOD CALLING YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2015 MEDICAL MISSION TRIP? | FIRST PRES MEDICAL MISSION TRIP FEBRUARY 18-23, 2015

Registration is now officially open for our FPC Medical Mission Trip to the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, where we will work for three-to-four days in a medical clinic setting, usually in or near the community of Leona Vicario.

We need doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists and/or Spanish-speaking translators. We are also always open to other medical personnel and some non-medical “go-fers.”

Each year we are hosted by YPM-Yucatan Peninsula Ministry, headed up by Rev. Wilian Cen and his wife Erly. Our time with them is always a blessing, and we look forward to working with them once again.

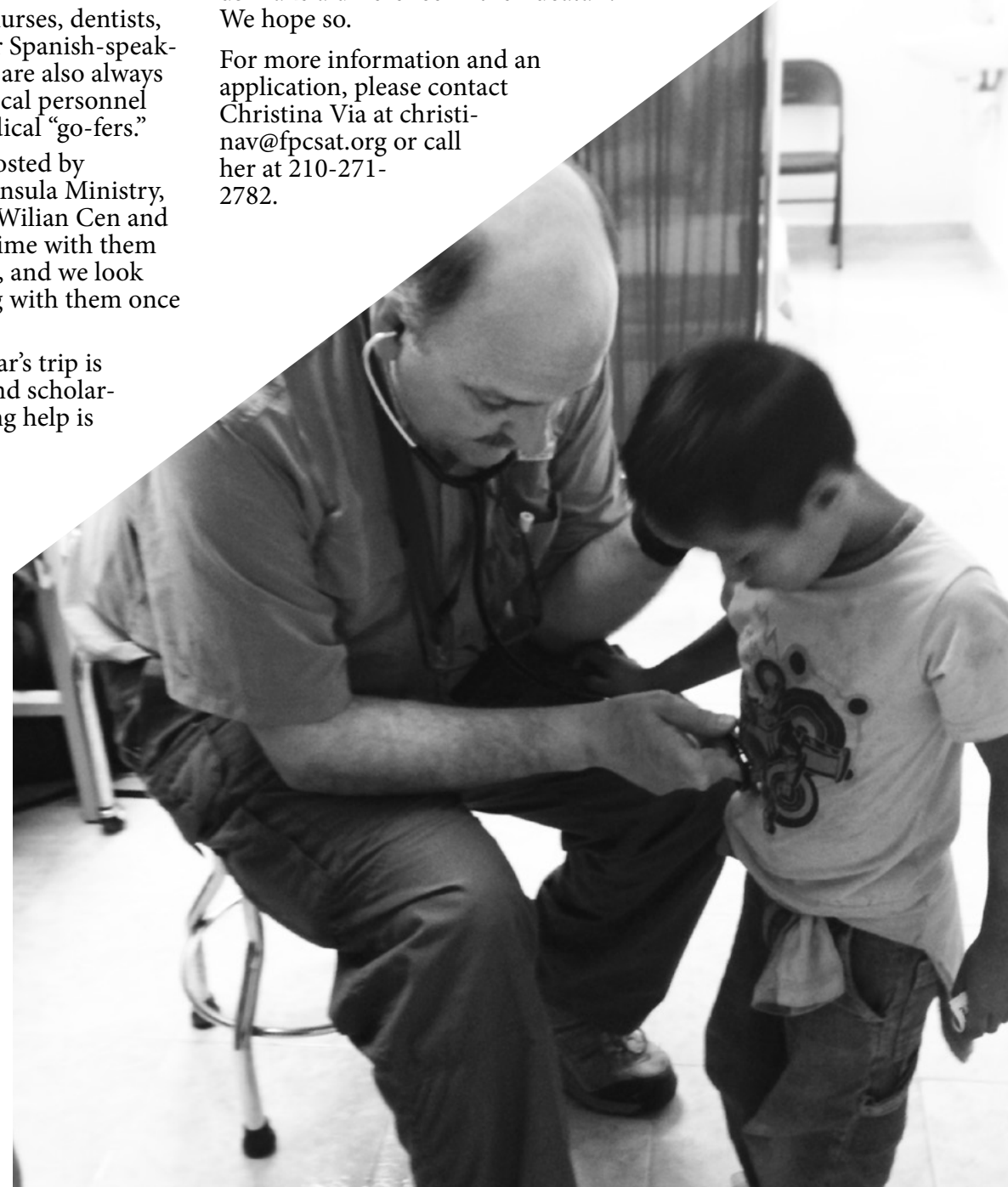
The cost for this year’s trip is \$600 per person, and scholarship and fundraising help is available.

The deadline to turn in an application along with a \$200 dollar deposit is December 10.

We encourage all adults to prayerfully consider participating in this trip. Is God calling you to come help us make a difference in the Yucatan? We hope so.

For more information and an application, please contact Christina Via at [christina@fpcsat.org](mailto:christina@fpcsat.org) or call her at 210-271-2782.

Blessings and Peace,  
The 2015 MMT  
planning team







## LOAVES & FISHES CONTINUES MAKING JESUS VISIBLE TO THE HUNGRY AND HOMELESS

**L**oaves & Fishes is a mission of love that takes place the last Sunday of every month. We welcome hundreds of our downtown homeless and hungry neighbors into our church, and give them a choice of dozens of wonderfully prepared dishes, adding up to a tasty, bountiful meal. As our number of guests continues to grow, so do our volunteer needs. We need many people to help make food, help serve food, welcome guests, and help clean up afterwards. We meet in the nutrition center at 3:00 p.m., and finish cleaning up around 5:00 p.m.

**W**hy is it important to provide this ministry? Texas is second most food insecure state in the nation. Defined, food insecurity is when you are so limited in resources to buy food that you are running out of food, reducing the quality of food that your family eats, feeding your children unbalanced diets, or skipping meals so your children can eat. According to a state report, three million Texans, or one in eight, (including 1.2 million children) were forced to visit a soup kitchen or food pantry to feed themselves in 2009. Even more concerning is the fact that Texas has the highest rate of childhood hunger and food insecurity in the nation at 22.1%, and in our own Bexar County, 23.5% of children are living in poverty.

### BRING A DISH BASED ON THE FIRST LETTER OF YOUR LAST NAME:

#### JAN, APRIL, JUL, OCT:

A-I main dish, J-Q veggie/salad, R-Z dessert.

#### FEB, MAY AUG, NOV:

A-I veggie/salad, J-Q dessert, R-Z main dish.

#### MAR, JUNE, SEPT, DEC:

A-I dessert, J-Q main dish, R-Z veggie/salad.

### Childcare available for all Loaves & Fishes:

If you have a child between the ages of 0-7 (children 5 or 6 and older can serve at Loaves & Fishes with a parent), please RSVP one week in advance with Becly Prichard, Director of Children's Ministry, at [beckyp@fpcsat.org](mailto:beckyp@fpcsat.org) or 210-271-2732. Sorry, drop-ins cannot be accommodated.

### Other opportunities to serve in December:

We will continue to host this wonderful program that feeds our homeless and hungry downtown neighbors the last Sunday of each month. The next opportunity is December 28.

If you would like to bring food or volunteer to serve food, please contact Christina Via at [christinav@fpcsat.org](mailto:christinav@fpcsat.org).

If you would like to serve food on other Sundays throughout the month of December, there are opportunities to do so:

- Church Under the Bridge hosts feedings every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday at 6:00 p.m. Many Loaves & Fishes patrons go from our meal over to Church Under the Bridge and then eat there as well. They feed three times a week, every week, so they will be feeding every Sunday in December. Learn more: [www.cubsa.org](http://www.cubsa.org)
- Taking It to the Streets feeds people every Friday night at the Church Under the Bridge property on Chestnut Street. Call 210-859-4735.
- Christian Assistance Ministry (CAM) gives out sack lunches every weekday morning in December. They are located across the street from FPC. Learn more: [www.christianassistanceministry.org](http://www.christianassistanceministry.org)
- Haven for Hope serves meals in the courtyard every day. They are located 1.5 miles away from FPC. Learn more: [www.havenforhope.org](http://www.havenforhope.org)
- The Catholic Worker House serves a hot lunch daily. Learn more: [www.sa-catholicworker.org](http://www.sa-catholicworker.org).

Currently, there are opportunities for four dinners and five daily lunches each week in December within about a mile or so of FPC. All of these ministries welcome any and everyone that wants to come to eat and to serve. We recommend them to clients and to those who want to volunteer in December as well.

## BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE! DONATE COATS AND JACKETS DECEMBER 1-28

Isn't it nice before you go outside on a cold day to wrap up in warm coat? Many people here in San Antonio actually don't know that feeling, as they're facing the elements of the winter without anything to keep them warm. December starts to get cold so please help our friends at Loaves and Fishes stay warm this winter by donating a gently used coat or jacket. Coats for men, women and children are all needed. You can drop off coats from Dec 1-28 in the Mauze Lobby and we will distribute them at our December Loaves and Fishes on December 28. Reminder: there will only be ONE Loaves & Fishes in December, on December 28. Thank you for helping to make Jesus visible to our neighbors in need this Christmas.



This past summer, the news outlets were largely dominated by stories of the Latin American unaccompanied minors fleeing violence and turmoil from their home countries and seeking a safer existence in the United States. Many children that have relatives here are being transferred, but San Antonio has several facilities housing children that have nowhere else to go. One of FPC's treasured local mission partners, Seton Home, has started a program called Casa De Milagros (House of Miracles) for young girls who became pregnant (many of them against their will) on their difficult journey from their home country to the U.S. In Deuteronomy 10:19, God tells the people of Israel, "So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt". FPC wants to continue to reach out in love to our neighbors, and we hope you will join us in showing hospitality to these girls who are in very difficult circumstances.

FPC has been partnering in service with the young women that live at Seton Home's main campus for years, and we value our ministry and relationship with

these pregnant and parenting girls. We now have an opportunity to expand our service at Seton Home to the young girls who have made the difficult trek from Central America to South Texas, and we hope you will consider being a part of this new ministry. Seton Home has invited us to have a monthly fellowship time with 10-12 Central American girls who are teen moms (or expecting) in December. These girls are in short-term stays with Seton while placement arrangements are made for a host family until their immigration status is resolved.

Our invitation is to have fellowship with the girls on the second Sunday of each month, from 12:30-2:00 p.m. The next fellowship time is Sunday, December 14, and we will host a Christmas-themed party for the girls and babies there. Come to Room 224 following the 11:00 a.m. worship services for a First Pres-provided lunch and then we will have a van and carpool to Seton Home together. If you are interested in serving, or for more information, please contact Christina Via, at [christinav@fpcsat.org](mailto:christinav@fpcsat.org) or call 210-271-2782.



## HELP SETON HOME MINISTER TO LATIN AMERICAN MOMS AND THEIR KIDS

## FPC'S MARKET OF HOPE RETURNS



On Dec 7 and 14, our First Presbyterian Church Market of Hope will once again be open for business 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, as they earn a fair wage for their hard work.

Your purchase provides hope and encouragement for Christian ministries in San Antonio and around the world.

Please note that the Market of Hope will be scaled down a bit this year, and only held on two Sundays, Dec 7 and 14, from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. This year our vendors will be supplying their own goods and handling their own purchases, so please come shop these local organizations that support the fair-trade mission.

We will also be offering our Alternative Gift Market, where you can purchase gifts of hope and healing for those in need, on December 7, 14, and 21. For more information, please contact Christina Via at 210-226-0215 x282 or [christinav@fpcsat.org](mailto:christinav@fpcsat.org).





## DIPPING INTO DECEMBER WITH KEYS OLDER ADULTS

BY PAT MCCLEARY, DIRECTOR, KEYS OLDER ADULT MINISTRY

During this special time of year, 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!

As we are coming to the close of another year, you are invited to join KEYS in our December Christmas festivities.

### ELF LOUISE CHRISTMAS WRAPPING PARTY TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

10:00AM-NOON AT PORT OF SAN ANTONIO  
Lunch together afterwards at Acadiana Restaurant (participants will buy their own lunches). Van transportation will be available leaving from the church with check-in time at 9:15 a.m. RSVP by calling Phyllis Griffin at 210-226-0215. You may bring an unwrapped toy or make a donation. Limit of 12 people.

### GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

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

### BRIDGE AND MAH JONGG

There will be no bridge playing during December. Mah Jongg will be played on Friday, December 12, at 1:00 p.m.

### ANNUAL KEYS CHRISTMAS PARTY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5

10:45AM AT WESTMINSTER HALL  
We are excited to welcome The Toro Flores Trio to entertain with a lively program before our luncheon. The trio includes Toro on modern marimba, Mark Little on piano and Aaron Walker on the drums and percussion. They bring a fusion of Latin and jazz music. Their ensemble sound is reminiscent of famous jazz trios of the 40s and 50s. There will also be some Christmas Carols. Arrive by 10:45 a.m. to enjoy some fellowship before the program and to be seated by 11:00 a.m. for the program and luncheon (\$7). RSVP by calling the church by Tuesday, December 2. No "Keep Moving Fitness" Class today.

### KEEP MOVING FITNESS CLASS

2nd floor New Student Center - 9:45 a.m. Friday mornings December 12 and 19 only. No class on December 5.

### SAVE THE DATE

Rick Cavender & Band February 6: "The Big Show." Look for more details in the January edition of First Press.



## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN BY ANN BUNN PW PRESIDENT

I am writing this just one week after the fabulous “Ties that Bind” Legacy Luncheon. Although I included my appreciation to all involved in the last issue of First Press, I have submitted some pictures from that wonderful day. Please be sure to mark your calendars for March 23rd, the date of the Spring Luncheon. We are in for a treat as Kelly Minter will be our speaker. The committee is already hard at work planning this event!

December is always a joyful and busy month at FPC and for the Presbyterian Women, too. We have women volunteers who make Jesus visible at so many events throughout this Advent Season. I hope you will choose to be one of those wonderful volunteers! Please Note: Although many women at FPC enjoy the fellowship of a circle, it is not required that you be a member of a circle to be a part of Presbyterian Women! We’d love for you to join us in a way that works for you!

We start the Advent Season by providing snacks for the Advent Festival on Sunday, November 30th from 3-5:00 p.m. If you can help with snacks for this event, please call Bunkie Shed (824-6690).

Our annual Christmas parties for Morningside Manor and Chandler Home are from 3-5:00 p.m. Thursday, December 4th and Thursday, December 11th, respectively. Please join us as we sing, visit and share the Christmas spirit. The FPC Friday Singers, the children from the FPC Children’s Center and our pastors will be there. Circles provide refreshments for the

parties and Circle 8 provides handmade ornaments for the residents. Please join us! For more information please call Pat Johnson (490-1047) about the Morningside Manor Party and Janet Wernli (828-1043) about the Chandler Home Party.

The Christmas Families Ministry Project is an ongoing event during the month of December as we adopt families in need through the House of Neighborly Service. Darcy Collins (830-755-4871) and Barbara Dorsey (828-9862) are in charge of this ministry this year. Please give them a call and they will be happy to help in assigning you a family and answer any questions that you might have. Please consider adopting a family this year—you WILL BE richly blessed by being a blessing to a family in need!

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 place for a time of rest and relaxation during the demanding and busy Christmas Eve. Karin Gabrielson (333-4239) is the Chair for this event. Please call her if you can help!!

May you and yours have a very Merry Christmas!

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6



## PW CIRCLE MEETINGS IN DECEMBER

- CIRCLE 112** - Monday, December 15th, 10:30 a.m., Geneva Room; Chair: Suzanne Thomas (210) 820-3245
- CIRCLE 2/4** - Monday, December 15th, 1:30 p.m., Room 226; Chair: Char-Ann Witten (210) 341-1856
- CIRCLE 5** - Friday, December 5th, noon-1 p.m., Room 228; Chairs: Caryl Gaubatz (210) 651-0208; Jane Ann Temple 414-9945
- CIRCLE 6** - Tuesday, December 16th, noon, Home of Ginny Way; Chairs: Mimi Hart 822-0809; Alice Nichols 826-4385; Linda Rittenhouse 824-2877
- CIRCLE 7** - Tuesday, December 9th, 11:30 a.m., Moderator: Pat Johnson, at the home of Jeannie Dullnig 822-9170; Chair: Meredith Park (210) 373-8180
- CIRCLE 8 (MOM'S GROUP)** - Wednesday, December 10th, Room 108, 9:30-11:30 a.m.; Chair: Sara Parish (210) 394-0865
- CIRCLE 9** - Tuesday, December 16th, 10:00 a.m., at the home of Margaret Gragg, (210) 493-8119; Chairs: Lucille Lammert 832-8414 and B.J. Neal 492-3188
- CIRCLE 11** - Monday, December 15th, 6:30 p.m., Hostess is Linda Ruhmann 826-0922; Chair: Suzanne Norton 344-7333
- CIRCLE 13** - Tuesday, December 9th at 1:30 p.m., McCullough Room; Chair: Jeanne Browning 824-3921
- CIRCLE 14** - Monday, December 15th, 12-1 p.m., St. Andrews Room; Chair: Lady Romano 828-5313
- CIRCLE 16** - No meeting in December
- CIRCLE 17** - No meeting in December
- CIRCLE 19** - Wednesday, December 3rd, 9:30 a.m., Room 309; Chair: Janet Beauch 673-3251
- CIRCLE 21** - Monday, December 15th, 6:30 p.m., Hostess is Andrea Taylor; Chair: Andrea Taylor 403-9442



## KEEPING PRAYER FIRST—AT FIRST

### CARE AND CONCERN LINE

The Care and Concern Line (C&CL) is designed to give you prayer support from the Body of Christ here at FPC, and allow you to provide prayer support to fellow members that need prayer. The C&CL is available in two ways: first by phone at 210-222-2273 and second by email. At anytime you may call on the phone and hear the recorded prayer requests. Join in praying for those requests. After listening to the prayer requests you will also have an opportunity to leave a prayer request that will be added to the recorded prayer requests by the next day. In order to receive the C&CL by email, call Stephanie Lopez at 210-226-0215 or email him at stephaniel@fpcsat.org. The C&CL will be sent to your email address once or twice per day. If you want to add a prayer request to the C&CL, you must have specific permission to do so from the person or their responsible representative. Prayer Ministry encourages you to participate in the C&CL to receive prayers from the Church and to pray for others in need. Please sign up to receive the daily emails or call in to listen to the prayer requests.

### PRAYER MINISTRY COMMITTEE

If God is calling you to help make prayer for FPC and its members more effective by joining the Prayer Ministry Committee, we meet once per month on the second Wednesday at 12:15 p.m. To join or find out more, please call Rev. Scott Simpson at 210-226-0215, Ron Baker at 210-494-0972, or Chuck Beatty at 210-826-3386.

### MONTHLY HEALING SERVICE

Prayer Ministry sponsors a monthly Service of Healing and Wholeness on the second Sunday of each month in the Guthrie-Bryant Chapel at 12:15 pm. In this service you will have an opportunity to receive specific prayer for your special needs and anointing with oil.

### DEVOTIONAL

From Luke 8:42b-48:  
As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

“Who touched me?” Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.”

But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.”

Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed.

Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

There is a song that many of us have learned to sing inspired by this scripture. It goes like this:

“Reach out and touch the Lord as he goes by, you’ll find he’s not too busy to hear your heart’s cry. He is passing by this moment your needs to supply. Reach out and touch the Lord as he goes by.” (Author unknown)

We have to have faith that Jesus still heals, for ourselves and for those in the Body of Christ. Again we encourage you to pray the Care and Concern Line requests on a daily basis and to join with us at the monthly healing service.

It is reported that John Wesley said, “I have often said it is not a sin to be sick, or to die; it is however, a sin to let sickness or death to unchallenged because there is no one to pray.”

## CHRISTMAS IN OUR LIBRARY AND BOOKSTORE BY JIM JOHNSON

Can you remember learning that there was more to Christmas than presents under the tree? Maybe someone read to you the story from the Gospel of Luke. I recall someone reading the story of Jesus’s birth (the real reason for Christmas celebrations) from Hurlburt’s *Story of the Bible* from 1932. This beautifully illustrated book is still available.

If you would like to refresh your memory about some beloved books from your earlier years as well as more modern publications, look at the Christmas sections in the Library; there are more than 300 books and recordings about Christmas and the birth of Jesus, such as: *A Love Worth Giving to You at Christmas* by Max Lucado; *Christ of Christmas: Readings for Advent* by Calvin Miller; the popular *The Littlest Angel* by Charles Tazewell; *The Story of the Other Wise Man* by Henry Van Dyke; and *The Advent Jesse Tree: Devotions for Children and Adults* by Dean Meador Lambert.

Some recordings (DVDs): *The Joy of Christmas* and *Ring Christmas Bells*, both by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square; *A Charlie Brown Christmas*; and *Mystery of the Three Kings: One of*

*the Great Stories of Christmas*.

We also have several of former Senior Pastor Louis Zbinden’s sermons: *The Voices of Christmas: Sermons from Advent and Christmas*, 1999; and *Advent Sermons and Christmas Eve 1992: Prepare Him Room*. We also have another wonderful sermon, *Let’s Keep Christmas*, by Peter Marshall.

In addition, there are items such as: *Christmas—They Point to Jesus* by Diane L. Gibson; *Kneeling in Bethlehem* by Ann Weems. We have large, beautiful coffee table books: *Christmas: An American Annual of Christmas Literature and Art*, and *The Saturday Evening Post Christmas Book*.

In the First Presbyterian Church Bookstore there are Advent calendars—several kinds; Christmas prayers and books: *God’s Blessings at Christmas* by Billy Graham; *Christmas book of Sing along and Carols*; *Celebrating Advent*; and *A Hill country Christmas Night*. Additionally, there are several types of tree ornaments.

By the time this is published we hope to have the Christmas shelves in the library and the bookstore decorated to assist you in finding the books and the items for sale.





## STAFF CHANGES



### WELCOME TO NEW INTERIM WORSHIP LEADER

We are pleased to welcome Samuel Pitamber as our Interim Contemporary Worship Leader.

Samuel was born and raised in San Antonio and has served in worship ministry leadership for 15 years. After earning his Bachelor's degree in Music from Hardin-Simmons University and his Master's in Vocal Performance from Rice University, Samuel spent four years serving as Pastor of Worship Ministries at a church in the Washington D.C. area. While living on the east coast, he met and married his wife, Heather Joy. Since returning to San Antonio in 2008, he has led at various churches throughout the community while also teaching middle school and high school choir in local school districts. He and Heather Joy are blessed with two beautiful children: Benjamin (age 5) and Evelyn (age 3). Samuel is honored to serve here at First Presbyterian and looks forward to being a part of this faith community.



### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY WELCOMES SONYA WRIGHT

Children's Ministry extends a warm welcome to Sonya Wright, the new Assistant Director of Children's Ministry here at FPC. We are excited to have Sonya on the team as she brings a lot of experience working with children of all ages, specifically nursery and preschool aged children! Sonya will be working alongside Becky Prichard, Director of Children's Ministry, as they serve the children and families of First Pres by teaching kids about the love and grace of Jesus! When you see Sonya, please introduce yourself and make her feel welcome here at FPC!

We are so thankful to Holly Youngquist for stepping in as the Interim Assistant Director as we searched for Sonya. Holly is such a blessing to the children's ministry and has been so appreciated in the interim role.



**SUSAN DULLNIG,** formerly Administrative Assistant for Congregational Care and Administrative Assistant for KEYS Older Adult Ministries, has begun her new role as Director of Facility Operations. She will schedule and approve all requests for the use of the church, including programs, social activities, funerals and memorial services, and maintain the church calendar of events.

### PHYLLIS GRIFFIN,

who was formerly Receptionist at FPC before moving away, has returned in that role. She will once again serve as a gracious and informed presence at FPC, expressing the desire of the church to welcome and assist all those who relate to us in any way, and being sensitive and discreet with all information received. As the first contact people have with FPC, her ministry is very important and we are excited to have her back!



### STEPHANIE LOPEZ,

who was previously serving as Temporary Administrative Assistant for Facility Operations, has begun her new role as Administrative Assistant for Congregational Care. Stephanie will provide assistance to Rev. Scott Simpson in his capacity as Associate Pastor for Congregational Care, and also provide administrative support for other committees and task forces within Congregational Care, including Hospital Flower Ministry, KEYS Older Adults, Prayer Ministry, Sanctuary Flower Committee, and Stephen Ministry.



**MOMENTS TO HOLD CLOSE  
A TINY TOUCH**  
BY MANNY RODRIGUEZ

The other day my wife just barely touched my skin, the most gentle of human contact. Even after all these years, the smallest of connections with her can still make me tingle. She detected that I had goose bumps and stated, "Sometimes it's the tiny little touch that feels so great."

How right she is. Think about the light touch of our own Heavenly Father. When He decides to provide grace and salvation for all humanity what does He send? An army? War? Fire from the sky? No, he sends a perfect infant baby, born in a manger, without pomp or circumstance, perhaps the tiniest touch of all. But oh, when you receive it, well, it truly feels so great!



**YOUR GIFTS  
MAKE MINISTRY POSSIBLE**

Many thanks to all who have returned your 2015 commitment card. If you have not had the opportunity to return your card or make your faith commitment online at [www.fpcsanantonio.org/give](http://www.fpcsanantonio.org/give), please do so at your earliest convenience so we can plan our annual budget.

If you have any questions, contact Janet Slayden, Business Manager, at 210-271-2751, or [janets@fpcsat.org](mailto:janets@fpcsat.org).

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY  
OCTOBER 2014**

OPERATING FUND BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	BUDGET YTD	OVER/(UNDER)
TOTAL REVENUES	3,211,061	3,399,429	(188,368)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	2,846,649	2,997,229	(150,579)
TOTAL BENEVOLENCES	627,918	635,981	(8,063)
FUND TFR FROM OPERATING RESERVE	300,000	0	(300,000)
NET INCOME/LOSS	36,493	(233,781)	270,274

THE MINISTRIES AND BENEVOLENCES OF FPC DEPEND ON YOUR GIFTS SO THAT WE CAN FULFILL OUR COMMITMENTS. PLEASE PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER YOUR GIFTS AS WE APPROACH YEAR-END. 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.

**CHANGES IN THE CHURCH REGISTER  
AS OF NOVEMBER 10, 2014**

**ACTIVE MEMBERS**  
(PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH;  
CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER;  
REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH)

- Alethea Bugg by Reaffirmation of Faith on October 19, 2014.
- Jean Alexander by Reaffirmation of Faith on November 9, 2014.
- Susan Crank by Reaffirmation of Faith on November 9, 2012.

**MARRIAGES**

- David Mario Valdez and Joyce Emily Alcala married at the home of Adriann and Sandy Lamas on October 27, 2014; Scott Simpson, officiating pastor.

**DEATHS**

- Kenneth Stephen Blanchard, died on October 21, 2014.
- Mary LaVon Lysne, died November 6, 2014.

\*denotes non-member



First Cup Readings – December, 2014

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 our libraries. 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

*Come, we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known;  
join in a song with sweet accord, join in a song with sweet  
accord and thus surround the throne, and thus surround  
the throne. The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred  
sweets before we reach the heavenly fields, before we reach  
the heavenly fields, or walk the golden streets, or walk the  
golden streets. We're marching to Zion, beautiful, beau-  
tiful Zion. We're marching upward to Zion, the beautiful  
city of God. (Worship in Song, # 75)*

- 1 Joshua 2; Matthew 1:1-6; Ephesians 2:11-22;  
James 2:25-26
- 2 Deuteronomy 11:26-32; Joshua 3-4; Psalm 42
- 3 Joshua 5-6; Hebrews 11:30;  
1 Corinthians 1:25; 3:18-23
- 4 Joshua 7; Deuteronomy 17:2-7; Acts 5:1-11
- 5 Joshua 8; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 6; 8:1;  
2 Timothy 3:14-17
- 6 Joshua 9; Psalm 15

*Lead on O King Eternal, the day of march has come;  
Henceforth in fields of conquest Thy tents shall be our  
home: Through days of preparation Thy grace has made  
us strong, and now, O King Eternal, we lift our battle  
song. Lead on O King Eternal, We follow, not with fears,  
for gladness breaks like morning where-e'er Thy face  
appears; Thy cross is lifted o'er us; We journey in its light;  
The crown awaits the conquest; Lead on, O God of might.  
(Baptist Hymnal, #417)*

- 7 Joshua 10-11; Psalm 56  
8 Joshua 23-24; Psalm 91; Psalm 116:15  
9 Judges 1-2; Deuteronomy 4:1-14; 6:10-7:6;  
2 Corinthians 6:14-18  
10 Judges 3; Deuteronomy 8-9; Psalm 50  
11 Judges 4-5; Psalm 89  
12 Judges 6; Exodus 34:10-14; Ezekiel 13:13-23;  
Colossians 3:5-11; Ephesians 5:3-6  
13 Judges 7-8; Deuteronomy 20:8; Psalm 76;  
2 Corinthians 4:7-18

*O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling, to tell to all the world that God is Light, that He who made all nations is not willing one soul should perish, lost in shades of night. Proclaim to every people, tongue, and nation that God, in whom they live and move, is Love. Tell how He stooped to save His lost creation, and died on earth that man may live above. Publish glad tidings, Tidings of peace; Tidings of Jesus, Redemption and release. (Worship in Song, #356)*

- 14 Judges 13-14; Proverbs 22:6; 12:4; 18:22; 16:9;  
20:24; Jeremiah 10:23
- 15 Judges 15-16; Proverbs 6:20-26, 34; 14:1; 16:4, 9;  
31:30; Ecclesiastes 7
- 16 Ruth 1; Psalm 88; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Psalm 30
- 17 Ruth 2; Leviticus 19:9-10; Romans 12:9-21;  
James 2:14-16; Luke 6:38
- 18 Ruth 3; Proverbs 3:5-6; 20:24; 31:10; Psalm 37
- 19 Ruth 4; Leviticus 25:23-25; Deuteronomy 25:5-10;  
Psalm 103
- 20 Isaiah 52; Psalm 98; Psalm 126

*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, #174)*

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

*Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore!  
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing, and triumph evermore.  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say,  
rejoice! His Kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and  
heaven. The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus given.  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I  
say, rejoice! He all His foes shall quell, shall all our sins  
destroy, and every bosom swell with pure seraphic joy.  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say,  
rejoice! (Hymnbook, #140)*

- 28 Luke 2:41-52; Proverbs 3:1-6  
29 Luke 3:1-23a; John 1:1-34  
30 Matthew 11:1-15; Mark 6:6b-29; Matthew 10:32-42  
31 Psalm 90; 2 Corinthians 5:1-1

## 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]





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