



# *First Press*

## **MERRY CHRISTMAS FIRST PRES!**

**DECEMBER 2016 ISSUE • FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**





# DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?!

BY REV. DR. RONALD SCATES • INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR

Is Christmas THE greatest miracle? THE miracle of miracles? C.S. Lewis thinks so, and I'm with him. He calls Christmas "The Grand Miracle." Here's what he says about it in his book entitled MIRACLES: "The central miracle asserted by Christians is the Incarnation. They say that God became Man. Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this.

Just as every natural event is the manifestation at a particular place and moment of Nature's total character, so every particular Christian miracle manifests at a particular place and moment the character and significance of the Incarnation. There is no question in Christianity of arbitrary interferences just scattered about. It relates not a series of disconnected raids on Nature but the

various steps of a strategically coherent invasion — and an invasion which intends complete conquest and 'occupation.' The fitness, and therefore credibility, of the particular miracle depends on this relation to the Grand Miracle; all discussion of this in isolation from it is futile."

In other words, the Incarnation — the miracle of Almighty God, Maker of Heaven and Earth, actually entering into time and space in the flesh and blood of the Person of Jesus — is the foundation, the roof, the supporting walls of this house we call our faith. Take away the Reality of the Incarnation — that Jesus is no less than God-in-the-flesh — and our Christian faith collapses like a house of cards.

This Advent, I'll be preaching on the Incarnation as we spend Christmas at Matthew's house: Looking at the Grand Miracle through the eyes of faith of a first century tax collector turned Christ-follower. As we do, my prayer for you, and for each of us, is that this graciously loving God, who was not ashamed to don the uniform of our human flesh, will richly bless you and yours as we eagerly await His return.

From the Scates family to all of you who are a part of the FPC family: a most joyous and Christ-filled Christmas!! We love you all dearly.

Be strong in the Lord,

+ Ron

## NOTICE OF CHANGE TO FIRST PRESS DISTRIBUTION

FPC Family,  
Beginning January 2017, we are looking to improve efficiencies with printing and paper by taking advantage of our technology, and have decided to move to an email-only distribution of First Press on the first day of each month, as well as available on our website. Printed versions of First Press will continue to be available in Mauze Lobby. If you do not currently receive our online version, please notify us at [communications@fpcsat.org](mailto:communications@fpcsat.org) in order to have your email address added.

NOTE: We will continue to send printed versions by mail to those in need of it. Please notify us if this is required.

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First Press is published monthly by the First Presbyterian Church San Antonio Communications Team. Deadline to submit content: the 10th of the previous month.

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RICK CAVENDER BAND

The ever-popular Rick Cavender, known both for his musical abilities and his television presentations on behalf of the Cavender Auto Family, returns to offer songs from “A Tribute to George Strait.” Band members will be Rick Ramirez, Keith Harter, Tammy Frost and Tommy Meneses. Save the Date for this exciting performance.

FEBRUARY 3

YOUTH SAVE THE DATES

Serving Saturday - December 3  
9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Youth Group Sunday Night - December 4 (only)  
6:00-8:00 PM

All Youth Christmas Party - December 11  
6:00-8:00 PM

Follow us on Instagram/Twitter/Facebook.

LITERATURE CIRCLE

The FPC Literature Circle will meet on Tuesday, December 13. Local author, Bonnie Lyons, will review her first full length book of poetry titled, “In Other Words,” that offers a series of dramatic monologues by women of the Bible. Each woman speaks in her own voice and with her own point of view of a particular situation, not just as written in the Bible by a man. Mrs. Lyons received her undergraduate and graduate degrees at Newcomb College at Tulane and her Ph.D in English Literature from Tulane University. She currently is a professor of English at UTSA.

DECEMBER 13 • 1:00 PM • MCCULLOUGH ROOM

CHRISTMAS AT FIRST PRES

**Midday Noels**  
Seasonal Celebration of Merry Melodies and Holiday Harmonies held in FPC Sanctuary at 12:10-12:45 PM.  
• Thursday, December 1 - Shimmering Keyboard Sounds and Sparkling Songs  
• Thursday, December 8 - A Barbershop Christmas  
• Thursday, December 15 - Brilliant Brass

**Alternative Gift Market**  
• Sunday, December 4

**Advent Worship Services**  
• Second Sunday, December 4  
• Third Sunday, December 11  
• Fourth Sunday, December 18

**Christmas Eve, December 24**  
• 3:00 PM - Communion Service  
• 5:00 PM - Family Service  
• 7:00 PM - Traditional and Contemporary Candlelight Services  
• 9:00 PM - Candlelight Service  
• 11:00 PM - Candlelight Service

**Christmas Day, December 25**  
• 10:00 AM Traditional Service

ORDER POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

Cut out out this order form or pick one up in Mauze lobby and follow the instructions for your Christmas Poinsettias!

Order your Poinsettias for Christmas

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

In honor of

On the occasion of

In memory of

Donor name

Donor address

City/State/Zip

Daytime phone

Preferred email

GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

The “Gift of Christmas” is a mission project coordinated by the Presbyterian Women of First Presbyterian Church. This Christmas Project is an opportunity for groups or individuals in our church to share Christ’s love by giving food, clothing, and gifts to families in need. We encourage all to share in this effort to include these HNS families in your Christmas giving. Gift of Christmas Family Request Forms are available in the Mauze Lobby through December 4th. Read more about this wonderful opportunity at [www.fpcsanantonio.org/gift-of-christmas](http://www.fpcsanantonio.org/gift-of-christmas).

MEDICAL MISSION TRIP

Our annual Medical Mission trip to the Yucatan will be here before you know it, so if you are interested in participating, please let us know! Contact Emily Jordan at [emilyj@fpcsat.org](mailto:emilyj@fpcsat.org) for an application—we’ll be taking participants on a first-come, first-serve basis.

MARCH 1-6

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Come join in the joyous celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ at the 2016 Christmas Pageant! The Pageant will be held on Sunday, December 4 at the 11:00 AM Traditional Worship service in the Sanctuary. Kids of all ages will be able to participate as sheep, angels, shepherds, Magi and the Holy Family! Invite your friends and family to join us on December 4 as our children tell the beautiful and timeless story of the birth of Jesus.

For more information, please contact Becka Byrd at [b2byrd@swbell.net](mailto:b2byrd@swbell.net) or Meg Walker at [meganstoffer@aol.com](mailto:meganstoffer@aol.com).

DECEMBER 4 • 11:00 AM



# LOAVES AND FISHES



Over 20 years ago, a small ministry called Loaves and Fishes was born in the basement of the church under the pastoral guidance of our pastors Jeff Wood and Louis Zbinden. Francis Warrick, Janet and Greg Anderson, and Sheila and Raymond Figueroa served as the first volunteer leaders.

As the ministry expanded over the years, Robert and Linda O’Nave stepped in and made Loaves and Fishes a very successful ministry at FPC through their leadership and the gift of time. For 18 years, their dedication was an inspiration to all of us, encouraging us to be eager and loyal volunteers each month. They collected the food each month, organized the kitchen and food preparations, set up the serving line and assured that the seasonal decorations were in place. As start time approached, they gathered the volunteers and led us all in prayers of blessings for all who participate and most importantly, the guests. During the time of serving Robert and Linda warmly greeted the guests, and were available to solve any problems. They were never finished until everything was clean and back in place.

This past month, Loaves and Fishes moved into a new location in partnership with Grace Lutheran Church. It will continue on the last Sunday of each month, but will no longer be led by Robert and Linda O’Nave. Due to changes in Linda’s health, the O’Naves had to step down, but we would like to recognize them for the years of hard work they put into this amazing ministry. Many lives have been changed by the commitment of volunteers led by Robert and Linda, so we would like to say “Thank You.”

Loaves and Fishes is FPC’s way of serving San Antonio’s ever-growing homeless/needy population. We continue to serve between 200 and 300 people each month, providing a seated, quality meal while sharing the love of Christ. For many of our guests, the volunteers of L&F have become like a “family” to them. In addition to food, our hungry/homeless seek fellowship and Christian encouragement as they struggle through the challenges of life. The ministry will continue with the same focus of years ago, knowing that offering choices to our guests allows them to experi-

ence a sense of dignity and self-respect that rarely comes their way. By doing this, the significance of each person who comes through the door is affirmed as being a child of God who we are called to love and serve.

Many volunteers from several churches and service organizations also provide our guests with clothing, toiletries, blankets and Bibles. Besides bringing and warming food, volunteers greet guests at the door, serve food, carry trays of food to the table, fill and refill drinks, serve desserts, visit and pray with guests, and help with clean up so that everyone can be served efficiently.

Our next Loaves and Fishes event will be held Dec. 18th, due to the Christmas holiday. Doors will open at 3:00 PM and we will need prepared food dishes and many volunteers. Prepared food may be brought to FPC and placed in the fridge adjacent to Westminster Hall for L&F prior to Sunday noon. This food will then be taken to Grace Lutheran Church for serving.

Loaves and Fishes is now located in Grace Lutheran’s fellowship hall behind the main sanctuary building, and can be accessed by taking the church parking lot entrance off of McCullough Ave.

If you would like to be involved in this amazing ministry through volunteering or donations, please contact Morgan Ford at FPC (226-0215).

“Then the King will say to those on his right. ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me...The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” Matthew 25:34-36, 40

- by Chuck Beatty





# KIDS, COSTUMES AND CANDY HIGHLIGHT TRUNK OR TREAT '16



**T**hank you to all who came to Trunk or Treat 2016! Children and their families visited several different decorated trunks to play games and collect treats. The most popular costumes this year were definitely Star Wars related! Our new Associate Pastor of Christian Education, Bob Fuller, dressed up as Darth Vader and we had a BB-8 droid, Princess Leia, and several girls dressed as Rey from the newest Star Wars movie. Many of the FPC Children's Center kids and families joined us for this fun event and it was such fun to see all of the different costumes and watch children and families having fun together.

We want to thank all who volunteered to host a trunk. We had some delightfully creative volunteers who provided a variety of games and decorations for the children to enjoy. We had a Safari trunk, golf trunk, music trunk, Frozen Trunk, Star Wars trunk, and the ever popular Spurs trunk! And of course, there was plenty of candy to go around!



## THANK YOU AND BLESSINGS FROM THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY STAFF



## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY 2016



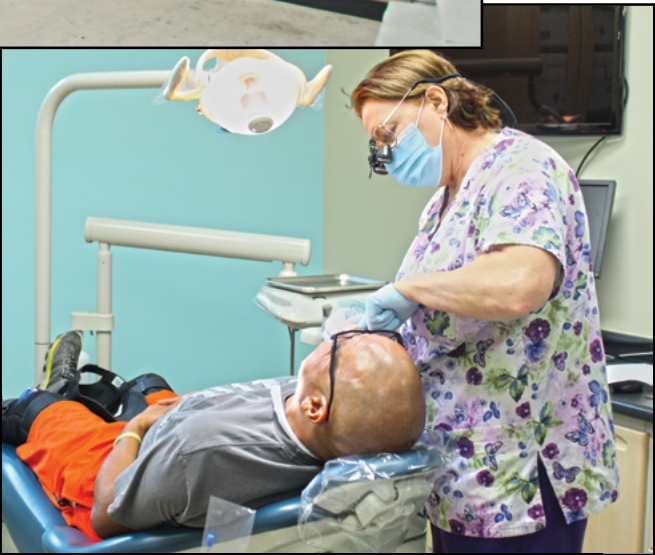
**C**hildren's Sunday at FPC on October 16 was a joyous day of celebration for our children and their families! The 5th grade students served alongside our pastors as liturgist leaders in all three worship services and our two-year-old children and 3rd graders received their brand new Bibles.

Sonya Wright, Assistant Director of Children's Ministry, led a workshop for the parents of two-year-olds about teaching our kids at a young age about the importance of the Bible and God's love for us. It is amazing that even at the young age of two, kids are able to understand the stories of the Bible and a solid foundation of truth will follow them as they grow up.

Becky Prichard, Director of Children's Ministry, taught the 3rd graders about their new Bibles and how to navigate through them in order to grow deeper in God's Word. The kids were excited to have their very own Bibles and could not wait to show them off to their parents and grandparents. Thank you to the congregation of FPC for supporting our children and their families, and for continually praying for them as they walk on their journeys of faith.



# HAVEN FOR HOPE



## 2016 UPDATE

“If we have dependable shelter tonight it’s tempting to draw a line of division between ourselves and the homeless. When our basic needs are being met it’s tempting to look away when we pass someone on the street who looks as if they might not have a home to call their own. However, homelessness is more than a lack of housing. Homelessness is a lack of belonging.”  
- Deidra Riggs, Author of *Every Little Thing: Making a World of Difference Right Where You Are*

We all have a history, a name, a place in time...our story. I invite you to go to Haven for Hope’s website and read the stories of seven people who have had an opportunity to transform their lives because of what has been offered at Haven since its opening in June of 2010. Go to [www.havenforhope.org](http://www.havenforhope.org). (Click on “About/Our Approach” to see “1000 Faces of Hope”). It will take you about seven minutes, and you will understand why I have been so blessed to be a part of a non-profit organization that has gone out of its way to help people change their lives, connect spiritually, and have an opportunity for new beginnings.

The city (under the guidance of Mayor Harberger), the business community (under the leadership of Bill Greehey), and the United Way came together and invited non-profit organizations—secular, faith-based and government—to pull together on one campus to help people experiencing homelessness on the streets of Bexar County. Or, as one young man living at the SAMM Transitional Living said, “I’m not homeless, I’m just houseless.”

It has involved changes in case management approaches, getting involved in mental health (one of the number one causes of homelessness, along with substance abuse), and care for the health issues of individuals living on the streets. It also involves trying to walk beside individuals in love, respect, and encouragement so that they can develop their own plan for transformation...sometimes a delicate dance between motivation and accountability.

They have added so much both to the facility and services that the scope of our vision staggers most visitors to the campus. As most of you know, the original vision of helping the homeless of San Antonio started with First Pres and several other downtown churches, under the leadership of our Rev. Dr. Louis Zbinden. Our church has been in the service of “being the hands and feet of Jesus” for many decades now.

One of our Partners, located on campus with us, is the San Antonio Christian Dental Clinic, also started by a member of First Pres, Dr. Orvis Meadow. They recently had a two-day clinic where they gave away \$100,000 of dental care! Many First Pres members volunteer there.

Haven’s zip code, 78207, has all of the main reasons individuals are experiencing homelessness. Nearly one-half

of the adults don’t have a high-school diploma and nearly 60% of adults are not working. Income is far below the state’s median level and poverty is stuck at 42%.

The area also suffers mental illness, addictions, health issues, job losses, low income, unintended teen pregnancies (in which Texas leads the nation), school drop outs, lack of transportation, lack of an official ID, outstanding warrants, loss of hope and self-esteem, and all of the other consequences of having a trauma in your life that you did not have the resources to control, or were physically unable.

More families have tried to get into Haven in the last three months than ever before. We currently have 183 children living on the campus.

If you have ever thought of getting in the mission field, it is in your own backyard! One of the volunteers in the after-school study rooms was told by a young man that the reason they were homeless was because his mother kept having to buy him new shoes because his feet kept getting bigger. That volunteer was there to reassure him, love him and encourage him.

People from all over the city have volunteered. I hope you have been led there. We need you, your prayers, your donations (both dollars and household goods), clothes, books, etc. The Warehouse is open Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, and Saturday 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM. Another Haven Partner, the YMCA, needs people to hold babies and read books to the children.

Our kennel needs volunteers, and volunteers are needed to work in the mail room. The San Antonio Food Bank and St. Vincent de Paul need volunteers to help serve food. Haven needs help at our reception desk directing members to their case managers. Intake needs help. Spiritual services needs help.

We are also looking for Docents who can help give tours to the businesses, schools, cities and organizations that are coming to Haven to check us out. Haven is becoming a national model for how to help the homeless. After a visit last year, a businessman from Portland, Oregon is starting a project in his city to help their homeless.

It is possible for us to be God’s agents in helping those who are struggling to recover from homelessness and reclaim their lives. After all, the Expert on New Beginnings is Jesus. He gives each one of us chance after chance to overcome our sins, ask for forgiveness and start over. He is the ultimate God of Second Chances. Isn’t that the Good News!

Call and ask for a tour so you can hear more about the many ways to volunteer or donate.

In Christ,  
Marian Pipes Brown  
210-860-5753; [mvpb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mvpb@sbcglobal.net)



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN  
BY LINDA RITTENHOUSE, PRESIDENT



The annual Fall Luncheon for Presbyterian Women was a wonderful success in all respects. Our speaker, Jonathan Sandys, left us with many thought-provoking insights into the remarkable story of his great-grandfather, Winston Churchill, and that wartime leader's belief in the role of Divine Providence in his life. I have included pictures from that very special day for everyone to enjoy. Also, those of you who would like to order a DVD of Mr. Sandys' speech may do so by filling out a DVD request card located near the receptionist's desk. Please write "PW Fall 2016 Luncheon Video" on the card along with your name, mailing address, number of copies and amount paid. DVDs are \$4 each and check or cash need to be given to the receptionist. On checks, please memo "PW Fall 2016 Luncheon Video" and make payable to FPC. The DVDs will be mailed to you. And now, please mark your calendars for Monday, March 27, 2017, the date of the PW Spring Luncheon. At that time, we will be privileged to hear the inspiring message of Susan Kerr, a longtime member of FPC and author of *Intersections of Grace: Reflections on a Life of Faith*.

Our PW members have many opportunities for service during this season of Advent. We begin by providing snacks for the Advent Festival, co-chaired by PW member, Rhae Chell Mauze, on Sunday, November 27 from 3:00 - 5:00 PM. Once again, food is generously given by the members of Circle 20, chaired by Bunkie Shed. Additionally, our group assists at the Christmas craft stations in Westminster Hall and helps in whatever ways are requested.

The Morningside Manor Christmas Party will be held on Thursday, December 1 at 3:00 PM and the Chandler Home Christmas Party will be held on Thursday, December 8 at 3:00 PM. Please join us as the residents enjoy beautiful holiday music from both the Friday Singers and the children of our own FPC Children's Center. Delicious cookies provided by PW Circle members will be served, and each resident will be presented with Christmas cards created by the children as well as a gift of a replica "stained glass" Nativity scene lovingly made by our Circle 8 Moms' Group, which is chaired by Lilly Gretzinger, Sara Parish and Meg Walker. Many thanks to Maggie Hardwick, chair of the Morningside Manor party and Janet Wernli, chair of the Chandler Home party and to Rev. Scott Simpson for his reading of the Christmas Story at these events.

The Christmas Families Ministry is ongoing during the month of December as PW circles adopt families in need through the House of Neighborly Service. Anne Scates and Judith McNeel are in charge of this project that provides the "Gift of Christmas" for many who are in difficult situations and who are extremely grateful for any assistance. A sincere thank you to our two faithful and hard-working PW chairs and to all the circles and individuals who are blessed by making Jesus visible to their adopted families. Please consider adopting a family this year and participating in this important Christmas ministry.

On December 24th, Presbyterian Women will once again host our Christmas Eve Reception honoring our ministers, choir and staff. Karin Gabrielson is the dedicated chair of this ministry that provides delicious refreshments during the demanding and busy Christmas Eve schedule at FPC. Karin has very generously and graciously chaired this event for several years and we thank her for her service. Please contact Karin at 843-2475 or karin\_gabrielson@hotmail.com if you can help with this important ministry in the life of our church during the holiday season. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2: 13-14 (King James Version)

PW CIRCLES

BIBLE CIRCLE 1/12

Monday, December 19 • 10:30 AM • FPC Geneva Rm  
Lunch (optional): \$8.00  
Chair: Suzanne Thomas 846-3240 suzannethomas54@gmail.com  
Moderator: Grace Labatt  
Study: *Women of the Bible*, By Ann Spangler and Jean Syswerda

BIBLE CIRCLE 2/4

Monday, December 19 • 1:30 PM • FPC Rm 226 (Red Rm)  
Chair: Char-An Witten  
hm: 341-1856 c: 602-7085  
Study: *Her Name is Woman*,  
by Gien Karssen

SHAWL MINISTRY CIRCLE 5

Friday, December 2 • 12:00-1:00 PM • FPC Rm 228  
Potluck snacks  
Chairs: Jane Ann Temple 414-9956, Kay Weber 288-5290

BIBLE CIRCLE 6

Tuesday, December 13 • 11:30 AM • Home of Shelly Harrell, hostess (255 Geneseo Rd 78209)  
Chair: Mimi Hart, 822-0809  
Study: *Intersections of Grace*, by Susan Kerr, ch. 12 and 23  
Topic: Serve the Opportune Time

BIBLE CIRCLE 7

Tuesday, December 13 • 11:30 AM • Home of Jane Ann Temple, hostess (150 El Rancho Way 78209) 414-9956  
Lunch: Bring sack lunch  
Chair: Alison Barker 872-4484  
barker.alison1@gmail.com  
Moderator: Judy Spencer  
Study: *Intersections of Grace*, by Susan Kerr, ch. 12 and 23  
Topic: Serve the Opportune Time

CIRCLE 8 MOM'S GROUP

Tuesday, December 6 • 9:30 AM • FPC Room 108  
Gift Exchange and Brunch (cooked by church): White Elephant ornament gift exchange, \$20 limit  
Chairs: Sara Parish 394-0865 sara23sc@hotmail.com, Lilly Gretzinger 601-0575 lilly@bunngroup.com, Meg Walker 601-7745 meg@aladdincleans.com  
Childcare: RSVP two days prior to sonyaw@fpcsat.org

BIBLE CIRCLE 9

Tuesday, December 20 • 10:00 AM • Home of Margaret Gragg, hostess (4 Inwood Ridge 78248)  
Chairs: Jan Magnus 829-5866, Pat Brannen 735-4415  
Moderator: Members of Circle 9  
Study: *Intersections of Grace*, by Susan Kerr, ch. 12 and 23  
Topic: Serve the Opportune Time

BIBLE CIRCLE 11

Monday, December 19 • 6:30 PM • Home of Pat Brodeen, hostess (2307 Oak Trace St. 78232)  
Dinner provided by various circle members  
Chair: Karin Gabrielson 843-2475  
Moderator: Pat Brodeen  
Study: *Intersections of Grace*, by Susan Kerr, ch. 12 and 23  
Topic: Serve the Opportune Time

LITERATURE CIRCLE 13

Tuesday, December 13 • 1:00 PM • FPC McCullough Rm  
Chair: Jeanne Browning 824-3921  
Book: *In Other Words*, by Bonnie Lyons

BIBLE CIRCLE 14

Monday, December 19 • 12:00-1:00 PM • FPC St. Andrews  
Lunch: By reservation  
Chair: Marilyn Morris-Etheredge 861-4314, Marilyn.morris@optum.com  
Moderator: Amy Robinson  
Study: *Women of the Bible*, by Ann Spangler and Jean Syswerda

MARJORIE MCLERNON SEWING CIRCLE 16

No meeting  
Chair: Lee Pressly 735-0978

EDNA RALSTON SEWING CIRCLE 17

No meeting  
Chair: Jeanne Baker 494-0972  
Vice Chair: Gigi Duke 695-4363

CIRCLE 18 CARE AND CONCERN

No meeting date  
Chairs: Char-An Witten 341-1856, Georgia Heath 695-9511

CIRCLE 19 WHITE CROSS CIRCLE

Wednesday, December 7 • 9:30 AM • FPC Rm 309  
Lunch: The kitchen makes soup (bring \$1) and provides water and coffee, a member will provide dessert  
Chair: Janet Beauch 673-3251

CIRCLE 20 CIRCLE OF SERVICE

No meeting date  
Chair: Bunkie Shed 824-6690

CIRCLE 21 – WOMEN'S EVENING BIBLE STUDY GROUP

No meeting date  
Chair: Andrea Taylor 403-9442, paladianpl@aol.com



# KEYS OLDER ADULTS

BY JOE MOORE, DIRECTOR OF OLDER ADULT MINISTRY

Although Christmas preparations begin showing up earlier and earlier, December will always be my Christmas month. I am looking forward to my first Christmas in San Antonio and at FPC. I realize that things may be a bit different this year and that I might not need my winter coat and gloves to decorate outside. As I wonder how Christmas could change for me, I am thankful that one thing will never change, the message of the angels to the shepherds, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Together with the leadership team and all of the KEYS fellowship, I want to wish you a Merry Christmas!!

KEYS will celebrate together with a Christmas Party on December 2nd. We are looking forward to hosting a Choral group from Alamo Heights High School under the direction of Angus McLeod. The festivities begin at 10:45 with “punch and cookies”. Around 11:00 AM we will enjoy a Christmas Concert presented by the Choir and a few sing along carols as well. Lunch will be served at noon. Reservations can be made through Stephanie Garcia at [stephanieg@fpcsat.org](mailto:stephanieg@fpcsat.org).

We are excited again this year to participate as a group in The Gift of Christmas. Our family of five includes three children, a daughter six months old, and two sons four and five years old. You can still join in with us up through December 11th. Thanks to Nona Hall, Geri McCorkindale and Suzanne West for their time and effort invested in this project. This experience reminds us how much more blessed it is to give than receive.

As this year comes to a close my prayer is that we will take time to reflect on God’s Blessings as we anticipate the New Year to come.

Keep On Trusting,  
Joe Moore  
Director of Older Adult Ministry

## RECENT KEYS EVENTS

We are continuously grateful to Doug and Judith McNeel for opening their home once again for our October Picnic. The weather was awesome, the hospitality was warm and embracing, and the music was amazing. “Thank you” does not seem adequate to express our appreciation!!

**On November 4** we were privileged to have Major General Angela Salinas join us for a celebration in appreciation of our Veterans. General Salinas spoke from experience as one who has served with care and compassion for those who have served. It was a joy to watch as she addressed each veteran individually while she handed out our small token of appreciation. We were deeply touched by her visit with us. (below)



**November 11** brought together the Literature Circle and KEYS with John Kerr, author of “The Silent Shore of Memory.” Our group of more than 50 enjoyed the conversation with John and the lunch that followed. John is a member of First Pres and we are privileged to have him available to us.

**On November 18** we traveled to New Braunfels to visit the Sophienburg Museum and to celebrate November Birth-

days at Gennaro’s Italian Resturant. In 1844, Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels and a group of emigrants set out from Germany to start a colony in the Republic of Texas. On March 21, 1845, he and his band of pioneers founded New Braunfels, named for his hometown in Germany. Prince Carl chose a hill overlooking the beginnings of the town and began his plan to build a castle on the site for his fiancée, Lady Sophia, Princess of Salm-Salm. He returned to Germany to bring Sophia to Texas, but she refused to leave. Prince Carl chose his fiancée over Texas and stayed in Germany to marry Sophia. He never returned to Texas. Today the Sophienburg Museum and Archives stands on the hill chosen long ago by Prince Carl.



**On November 28** we enjoyed wrapping gifts with Elf Louise. Elf Louise provides toys for children who otherwise might not have a Christmas gift. After wrapping, we lunched together at Acadiana Restaurant. This was a wonderful opportunity to make Jesus Visible! (above)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**December 2:**  
KEYS annual Christmas Party (pictures coming January!)

**December 9 and 23:**  
Games at 1:00 PM

**January 6:**  
Tom Jackson as President Abraham Lincoln. On Friday, January 6th, join us as KEYS begins our New Year with a good friend Tom Jackson. Tom will introduce us up close and personal to Abraham Lincoln through his living history presentation in character as the 16th President of the United State. Other January highlights include San Antonio Fire Chief Charles Hood on the 13th, Birthday Lunch at Fort Sam Houston on the 20th, and Lorna Jean Miller speaking to us about the Church in Cuba on the 27th.

**January 13:**  
San Antonio Fire Chief Charles Hood

**January 20:**  
Birthday Lunch at Fort Sam Houston

**January 24:**  
Rev. Lorna Jean Miller The Church in Cuba

**January 6, 13, and 24:**  
Keep Moving Fitness

**February 3:**  
Save the date to see Rick Cavender and His Band “A Tribute to George Strait.” More details to come!!



# HISTORY CORNER | BY BILL COGBURN

## SAMUEL G. NEWTON AND THE CHRISTMAS APPLES



Much has been said and written about First Presbyterian's pioneer preachers such as John McCullough and Robert Bunting. Less recognized is Samuel Newton, an elder in the early church who played a vital role in providing constancy in the young Presbyterian congregation. In the early years, First Presbyterian ministers had a tendency to come and go, which left the little band of believers without leadership for long periods of time. In those uncertain times, Newton was one who provided the leadership that held the little flock together.

Newton was originally from New Haven, Connecticut but had served as a missionary to the Osage Indian Nation in southern Missouri before moving to Cain Hill, Washington County, Arkansas about 1840. The Newton family's first known association with San Antonio was when Samuel Newton's son, Frank McCarty Newton, brought a wagonload of Arkansas apples to San Antonio in 1847. He sold the apples for ten cents each or one dollar a dozen. Shortly thereafter, the Newton family moved to San Antonio where Samuel and his son, Frank, joined a group from New York going to the California gold fields.

During their absence, Mrs. Newton, a school teacher, took a young orphan boarder, James Pearson Newcomb, into her San Antonio home and also into her class as a student. Years later, after Newcomb had become a journalist, he would recall the arrival of the Christmas apples from Arkansas:

"The day before Christmas was made memorable by the arrival of three wagons loaded with apples. These apple merchants had driven all the way from Arkansas to reach San Antonio, the best market in Texas. These "covered ships", bearing a cargo more fragrant to the inhabitants of San Antonio

than the spices borne by the wise men to Bethlehem, had no need to advertise, the air becoming perfumed along the streets they traveled, and young and old followed up the wagons until they halted and began to peddle their cargo at 10 cents per apple, but what apples they were. I have never tasted any near so delicious."

After Samuel and his son returned to San Antonio in 1848, Samuel was received by letter into McCullough's church. As an elder, he began to play a vital role in the growth and stability of the struggling frontier congregation.

For a time in the 1850s, Samuel Newton taught primary students in the local public school. He taught the alphabet by playing notes on his violin. Both he and his wife taught Spanish and Latin and "the ordinary branches of high school." In June 1853, Samuel Newton served as Secretary of the Auxiliary Bible Society in San Antonio. In July, 1853, Newton, along with three other ruling elders raised \$1,600 to save the Old Adobe from being sold at a sheriff's sale which had been scheduled for September 6, 1853.

By the onset of the Civil War, Samuel Newton had become an established San Antonio attorney with offices on Main Plaza. Later, in 1884, he would be a founding member of the San Antonio Bar and a member of the San Antonio Club in 1887.

Henry Bunting, son of Reverend Robert Bunting wrote, "Only one person of this earliest congregation in San Antonio, Samuel Newton, was destined to take part in the forming of the second and third congregations." Samuel Newton's influence didn't stop there. From the time he joined our church in 1848 to this day, there have been seven generations of his family on our church rolls.

Source: Adobe Walls to Stone Edifice by Donald E. Everett; San Antonio Express; SAPL Texana Room



BEYOND THE STAINED GLASS | BY BECKY PRICHARD, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



The season of Advent is upon us! This is one of my favorite seasons of the church year as we get ready for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Advent is a time of preparation and expectation; waiting in hopeful anticipation for the birth of Jesus that we celebrate on Christmas.

This Advent season is especially poignant for me as my husband, Colby, and I are expecting our first baby in December! We are overjoyed and abundantly blessed to be entrusted by God to raise this baby girl. As we prepare for her arrival, I find myself flooded with a mix of emotions: excited, joyful, scared, tired, anxious, ready and unprepared all at the same time. If I feel all of this, I can only imagine how Mary must have felt as she prepared to give birth to the Son of God!

As each day goes by, many of them feeling long and slow, I find my thoughts wandering to what it will be like to wake up in the middle of the night to change diapers and feed the baby. Then suddenly, my thoughts jump to our baby being in middle school and praying that she will have friends and make good decisions. Then as one thought leads to another, I picture her preparing to leave for college and I begin to feel overwhelmed and tearful. When I fall into these spirals, Colby constantly reminds me that first of all, the baby is not even born yet; secondly, all we have to do right now is just get through one day at a time, trusting that God will provide through every step. I have spent so much time worrying about the future that I rarely stop to marvel at the fact that a human life is growing inside of me, or to wonder at each kick and movement of

the baby, or the sound of the baby's heartbeat echoing through the doctor's office, or to admire the itty bitty baby onesies that are hung in the closet.

Isn't that so typical of us as humans? We are so tempted to jump ahead and begin worrying about things far down the road that are out of our control and we miss the joy and peace that God offers us in the waiting and preparation. What if we stopped to give thanks at every step of the way and put our trust in God to handle the rest of it?

This is especially true throughout the season of Advent. We become overwhelmed with Christmas shopping or holiday parties or just wanting to jump right to Christmas that we forget to slow down and sink into the waiting process. Each day we wait, we must trust in the promises that God has made and sit in the truth and peace of God's love and grace.

About 700 years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah wrote, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Talk about a season of waiting! As the people of God waited for the promised birth of Christ, God was preparing their hearts for what was to come. God does the same thing in our lives as we wait for the triumphant return of our Savior. While we wait, we cling to this promise and trust in the Almighty power of God.

I encourage you as you walk through this Advent season to rest in the comfort and peace of God and enjoy the waiting. Rest in the waiting. Give thanks in the waiting. Worship in the waiting. Surrender to God in the waiting. O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS!

Your library is always in need of books and audiovisual items, however we are at present very short of space to shelve religious and general subject items. There is some space for fiction and Texana items. We do not want to discourage your sharing books/audiovisuals with your church library, therefore we ask that you contact us before you bring your items. There are only

five volunteers working a few hours each week to maintain your church library, so with our space limitations, we ask you to allow us to be selective in receiving new items. Please do not bring in books that have been a part of a church-wide study program or that are on the Literature Circle reading list. We almost certainly will have a copy of such items already. On a positive note...

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS!, CONTINUED...

we always welcome children and youth materials. In any case, please contact one of the library volunteers: Suzanne West, Jim or Nancy Johnson, or Janet Beauch, prior to bringing your donations. We normally work in the library on Thursdays from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM and someone is usually working Sunday mornings

from 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM. You can email Jim Johnson at nanjim55@sbcglobal.net. We always check donations to discern whether we have a copy of the item. If your donation is a duplicate—unless you have specifically asked to have it returned to you—we will offer it to Haven for Hope or the Salvation Army.

MOMENTS TO HOLD CLOSE | THEY NEED YOU | BY MANNY RODRIGUEZ



During times of corporate mergers, office life can be challenging to say the least. As rumors circulate, uncertainty of job security sets in and false accusations emerge between co-workers in hopes of ensuring self-preservation. As I got dressed ready to head to the office, mentally preparing myself for another day of nonstop sniping and bitterness my sweet spouse kisses my cheek and whispers in my ear, "They don't deserve you." Now I am the first to admit, I am no box of candy myself, but how many times have we felt that way about those that we love and care about as we send them off into the world? Perhaps our child who is so sweet and innocent, full of love—only for them to be bullied or picked on at school. They don't deserve you, we say. It

could be the physician, working tirelessly to maintain his patient's health in a hopeless situation only to be met with the wrath of the patient's family for not doing more. They don't deserve you. It can even be as trivial as our favorite athlete, who has played an absolutely unbelievable game against the number one team in the country, surpassing everyone's expectations yet after his first interception receives a chorus of boos. They don't deserve you. The truth is that at times we may receive unjustified pain, but we equally accumulate our share of unjustified sin. But there is One that never has, a savior that was born to us with the sole purpose of dying on the cross. How badly do you think our Heavenly Father wanted to say to His one and only perfect son, They don't deserve you? And He would have been entitled, but do you know what He said instead? They need you. And aren't we forever grateful that He did? Merry Christmas everyone!

FINANCIAL SUMMARY   OCTOBER 2016			
OPERATING FUND BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	BUDGET YTD	OVER/(UNDER)
REVENUES			
CONTRIBUTIONS	2,846,144	3,194,082	(347,938)
TOTAL REVENUES	2,846,144	3,194,082	(347,938)
EXPENDITURES			
OPERATING	2,580,499	2,855,830	(275,332)
BENEVOLENCES	435,548	434,344	1,204
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	3,016,047	3,290,175	(274,128)
NET INCOME/LOSS	(169,903)	(96,093)	(73,811)









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