



FIRST PRESS

JANUARY 2018



BLESSING FOSTER FAMILIES



BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

REV. DR. BOB FULLER

2018 is not just a New Year for San Antonio. 2018 is the year we celebrate our city's 300th anniversary (founded 1718).

Last year, in 2017, we joined protestant churches around the world in celebrating the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation (October 31, 1517).

In 2016, our congregation celebrated our 170th anniversary as a church. In 1846, our founding pastor, Rev. John McCullough, established First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio.

And each year at Christmas we come together to celebrate the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2018 years ago Jesus Christ was born, and that event is so important that it defines the way we measure our time and years.

At the turn of this new year, I would ask you to remember one more date. That date is 2091 B.C. (2091 years before the birth of Christ). Approximately two-thousand and ninety-one years before Christ was born, God called a man named Abram to be His servant. The Lord made Abram a promise.

God said:
I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great.

But He also said this:
I will bless you and make your name great, **so that you will be a blessing.** (Genesis 12:2-3)
In other words, God was not going to bless Abram alone. Through Abram (later known as Abraham), God was going to bless the world.

These are words for Abram, and they are words for us. As we begin this new year today, I want us to keep two things in mind.

First, I believe that God is going to bless First Presbyterian to be a great church in 2018. As a young minister in Charlotte, North Carolina, I was steeped in the stories of FPCSA by Dr. Bill Wood. Dr. Wood was pastor of FPC Charlotte but began his ministry as an associate pastor here at FPC San Antonio. Under his influence I began to understand that FPCSA is a great church, and to look to you as a model for kingdom leadership. Over the years, God has blessed you with great leaders, great people, great resources and great challenges. I mention those great challenges

because those have been moments of testing, refinement and faithfulness. We should always count moments of struggle as moments when God is fortifying us for future service.

Second, as we remember God's words to Abram and to us, we should remember that God blessed Abram so that he would be a blessing to others. To our list of blessings, we may add that God has blessed us with opportunities. How is God challenging us to bless this city with greater compassion and the clear declaration of His love in Jesus Christ? How is God challenging us to love one another through greater fellowship and care? How is God challenging us to love Him more through deeper devotion and discipleship?

2018 is a year to celebrate history. It is also a year to make history. For FPC, our legacy is our platform. How can we leverage our historical context as a "mission church;" in our special geographic context in the center of the city; and, in our special cultural context at the "equator" of North American and Latin American Christianity.

2018 is not just a year to take another lap around the sun. This is a year to figure out how we should use God's blessings to love Christ more, to love one another better, and to prove our love for San Antonio.

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SAVE THE DATE



CORNELL CHOIR IN CONCERT

JANUARY 7 • 7:00 PM • FPC SANCTUARY

We will welcome the ladies of the Cornell University Chorus on their winter tour, comprising of fifty individuals. The Chorus performs a repertoire spanning eight centuries and ten languages, including masses, motets, spirituals, folk, and a variety of other classical and contemporary pieces.

HOSTING OPPORTUNITY

On Sunday, January 7, 2018, FPC will be hosting the Women's Chorus from Cornell University in a concert performance here at the church. After the 7:00 PM concert concludes, we need approximately 20 host homes to lodge these ladies for one night. They will have dinner here at the church prior to the performance, so all you need to do is provide them a place to stay and breakfast on Monday morning prior to bringing them back to the church by 8:30 AM. If you would be willing to host, please contact either Tom Dooling (tomd@fpcsat.org) or Katie Shaw-Meadow (katiesm@fpcsat.org) so we can add you to our hosting list.

LITERATURE CIRCLE

JANUARY 9 • 1:00 PM • MCCULLOUGH ROOM

It's 1944, a baby boy is born, a father is killed in an airplane strafing run during the war, a dusty military footlocker is discovered in his Mother's garage and an unexpected letter arrives from overseas. Thus begins a mystery to be solved step by step by the local author, Conrad Netting IV--his DELAYED LEGACY. Mr. Netting will review this true story of his emotional quest to understand his father's life and death--a journey completed! Bring a friend and join us Tuesday, January 9, at 1:00 PM in the McCullough Room for a half hour social followed by this remarkable story.

RICK CAVENDER COMING SOON

FEBRUARY 2 • 11:00 AM • WESTMINSTER HALL

Rick Cavender will be back with us singing the classics on Friday, February 2, including a tour of the greatest songs from the 50s and 60s. We are excited to have this all time favorite event again this year, so don't miss it!

HOUSE OF PRAYER

JANUARY 10 • 5:30 PM

Join us Wednesday Night, January 10 for a House of Prayer Gathering! Something powerful happens when the body of Christ prays together, and it is happening at First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio. In August, we launched our House of Prayer Movement and in the last four months the Lord has blessed us in so many ways. We have heard reports of prayers answered, friendships renewed, hope proclaimed and new connections being made. In both detail and broad brushstrokes, we are seeing the Holy Spirit at work.

In celebration of all of God's gifts, we are going to bring the church and our small groups together for a big House of Prayer gathering, Wednesday, January 10. We will be praying for the Church in 2018 and our theme for the meeting will be "Seeing God's Vision—Listening to God's Voice."

We will share a meal together beginning at 5:30 and the program will begin at 6:00. It will be a time for us to pray together, sing together, learn together and spend time together. Dinner is \$8.00 for adults, \$6.00 for children 10 and under. We need reservations for dinner by Monday, January 8. Please make your reservations with the church receptionist (210-226-0215).

If you are not yet part of the House of Prayer movement, please join us on January 10 to learn more about it and to get connected.

LOVE 2.1.0. WEEKEND

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10-11

"Loved by God...serving our neighbors...loving the city." Love 2.1.0. is a weekend for our FPC family to engage the city of San Antonio, being exposed to what the Lord is doing in our city by serving with ministry partners as we are educated through participation in their ministries. Love 2.1.0. will empower and equip us to move beyond the parking lot and into the city, as we learn to love our neighbors as ourselves and seek the welfare of the city where the Lord has placed us (Jer. 29:7). Service projects will be Saturday morning, 8:30-11:30, with BBQ lunch in the church parking lot afterwards with our city neighbors! Questions? Please contact Lindsay Selli at lindsays@fpcsat.org.

PBS WITH REV. DR. BOB FULLER

JANUARY 11 • 9:30 AM

PBS: Pastor's Bible Study with Rev. Dr. Bob Fuller

Politicians make promises. Advertisers make promises. Co-workers make promises. Friends and family members make promises. We even make promises. How many of those promises are kept?

Beginning January 11, 2018, Rev. Dr. Bob Fuller will lead a series titled "Abraham, Sarah and the God who Keeps His Promises." Join Dr. Fuller as we study how God engineered the redemption of the human race by keeping his word to two faithful, ordinary, and occasionally skeptical people.

The Pastor's Bible Study (PBS) will begin at 9:30 AM in Covenant Hall on January 11. Small groups are forming and will meet weekly for deeper discussion.

WINTER LADIES' NIGHT OUT

JANUARY 25 • 6:00 PM MINGLE • 7:00 PM DINNER

Please mark your calendars for the Women of the Church Ladies' Night Out event. Come celebrate the new year with great friends and delicious food. We will once again be in the Casa Alicia party room at La Fonda on Main. 6:00 PM Mingle. 7:00 PM Dinner.

Dinner consists of a chicken chalupa and traditional enchilada served with guacamole, hot sauce and chips, as well as tea or coffee. Cash bar from 6:00 to 7:00 PM. As always, the evening culminates with the drawing of door prizes!

Your \$20 check is your reservation. Sign-up table will be set-up every Sunday, beginning January 7. Seating is limited to 80 so don't wait! You may also mail your checks made out to FPC, with WOC in the memo section, to Betsy Zachry at 2218 Camelback Dr., 78209. Questions? Contact Betsy at 210-262-1236

PARENTS' DAY OUT

PROVIDES FUN RETREAT FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

The Apostle James tells us that true religion is to love the orphan. Why? Because the love of God was shown to us through Christ while we were orphans and by grace we have been adopted into the family of God.

On Saturday, December 2, our congregation partnered with the South Texas Alliance for Orphans to participate in true religion. The Alliance is a new ministry that FPC helped launch last year that exists to support, equip and encourage churches in fulfilling the biblical orphan care mandate. In corporation with FPC Children's Ministry and our Local Missions Committee, seventeen young adults opened the doors of our church for four hours to love orphans and serve foster families. Ten families showed up with more than thirty children as parents went out for much needed time together, and children stayed to be loved and served.

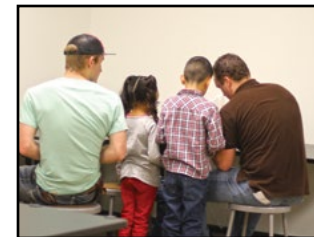
Foster parents have very limited opportunity to go

on dates, as legal protections for the children hinder friends and families from watching them. The first family to drop off their children (they were eager, showing up early!) was asked when the last time they had a date together. They could not remember, saying it had been months, at least. FPC young adults joyfully received their children for four hours and, as with all the families who came, the couple received a \$20 gift card donated by Casa Rio before going on their date.

Young adults enjoyed time with foster children through games, crafts, and conversation, and the theme of advent allowed young adults to share the gospel throughout the day. The love of Christ was connected through craft and conversation with many children who may not otherwise hear the reason for the season, as the joy and love of Christ was evident through games and play. The Spirit of God was clearly present during the Parent's Day Out, and His fruit was in aspect of the day.

The Parent's Day Out service day was initiated by young adults and executed as a collaborative effort by our FPC family, in order to love children who do not have a family. We pray the love of Christ impacted both the children and families who came AND that our FPC family will grow in showing the love of God to our city. God has first loved us in Christ so we get to love others and serve our city.

"But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." Jeremiah 29:7



ADVENT FESTIVAL 2017

BY KAREN CARAWAN, MEMBER OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY COMMITTEE



On December 3, Westminster Hall was filled with joy, laughter and Christmas cheer at the annual Advent Festival! Each year the Children's Ministry Committee produces the Festival to celebrate this special season. It's full of many activities that are Christmas themed that the whole family can enjoy and participate together! This year the activities included: cookie decorating, face painting, and selfie's at the manger, which was filled with silliness and giggles as kids and parents dressed up as animals, shepherds or angels! The kids also decorated the gingerbread house and made handprint wreaths, which were especially fun and memorable as even our parents of babies had their wreaths made with those tiny hands that don't stay tiny too long! Kids made ceramic tiles that were creatively decorated by the artistically-inclined with beautiful Christmas scenes or cheerful verses/phrases. Families also had the opportunity to make crystal ball ornaments filled with glitz, Pet food bags assembled for pets, reindeer food bags assembled for Santa's reindeer, jingle bell ornaments, and Christmas cards for the deacons to take to home-bound members of FPC. They also assembled bags of grace for our street friends – filled with necessities like toiletries and yummy snacks. One of the favorite activities every year is making an advent wreath complete with candles and real evergreen garland and a devotional guide to have in your home – they also make your home smell amazing!

And to top off all these wonderful activities – the air was filled with the beautiful chords of Christmas music and some caroling by our Children's Choir! It was certainly a wonderful time had by all and a wonderful way to kick off the Advent Season. If you missed it, we hope you'll make plans to come next year!



FPC CHILDREN SHINE

AT CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2017

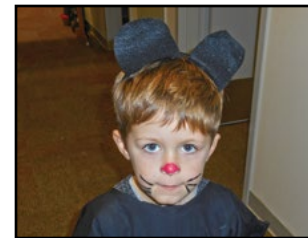
“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to all men!” These are the words that were proclaimed throughout the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 10 by the children of FPC during the Christmas Pageant. Praise be to God!

Kids ages four through 5th grade participated in the Christmas Pageant and told the story of Christ’s birth that we find in Scripture to the congregation. Our littlest helpers were stable mice, the kindergarteners played the role of the sheep, the first graders were shining stars, the second and third grade girls were beautiful angels, the second and third grade boys were handsome shepherds, the fourth graders carried the dove and star banners and our fifth graders were the Bethlehem cast including Mary, Joseph, Gabriel, the Magi and of course the Camel!

This was a meaningful experience for our kids as they proceeded down the aisle as the Christmas hymns were played and sung, and they felt what it must have been like to be at the manger all those years ago when Christ was born.

The Children’s Ministry team would like to extend a big thank you to Jae Ha for accompanying the Pageant with the organ, the parents and volunteers that organized and dressed the kids, and the Pastors and congregation for welcoming the kids as worship leaders and celebrating the birth of Christ alongside the kids.

We look forward to this wonderful tradition each year because it inspires us and reminds us of the truth of the gospel of Christ! Next year will be here before we know it, so get ready as you won’t want to miss it!



GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

BRINGS JOY TO FAMILIES THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY
BY DIANE CARSSOW AND NANCY PUCKETT, GOC CO-CHAIRS



Women of the Church Gift of Christmas 2017 was once again a wonderful and successful project! Twenty-nine deserving families, all screened by House of Neighborly Service (which is located on the west side of San Antonio), were adopted, provided gifts, and received many blessings and prayers. The families were helped by groups within our church such as Women's Circles, Sunday School Classes, the Sanctuary Choir, the Church Staff, Bible study groups, individual families, and individual contributions.

For those who may be new to our church, Women of the Church's Gift of Christmas has a long and generous history of serving those in need as we celebrate our

Savior's birth. For many years, this project was known as "Christmas Baskets." The first mention of this project in our church archives is in the 1958 Women of the Church Annual report, citing "A few circles...filled Christmas boxes for needy families." In 1962, "Circle members contributed Christmas gifts for patients at the State Hospital and for the Christmas Clearing Bureau (a United Way Agency)."

In 1982, Vicky LePere was Chairman of the "Christmas Baskets Committee in cooperation with the Salvation Army." She reported that 37 families (176 people) received very generous baskets! In the early 1990s, we began partnership with House of Neighborly Service. "Shirley Crews and Suzy Banta were hard at work on the Christmas Basket project – 45 families served!"

One such family was served this year by the New Covenant Sunday School class. Dr. Kaye Wilkins and Charlie Smith visited the Eduardo Rodriguez family at their nice single-story home near Kelly Air Force Base. Philippians 4:13 scripture (in Spanish) graces the front door of their home. The father works in construction when weather allows, and the three school age boys all attend KIPP schools. Their three-year-old little girl attends pre-school at their church. The mother only speaks Spanish, but the school age boys were great at providing interpretation and eager to help. Dr. Wilkins stated, "The children were well dressed, well behaved, and very poised." The oldest boy, a 16-year-old young man at KIPP U-Prep school is anxiously looking for a part-time job!

Serving such families is why Gift of Christmas has been such a success for so many years. Sharing Christ's love with others is the reason for the season. Be sure to adopt your family early next year!

THE REST OF THE STORY ABOUT YOUR DEACONS

BY HOLLY YOUNGQUIST, BARBARA DORSEY, CAROL WEST, AND
JANE BLACKBURN OF THE 2017-2018 SEASONAL FLOWER COMMITTEE

The Seasonal Flower Committee is one of the many committees of the Diaconate here at First Presbyterian Church. We organize, schedule and support the delivery of a Christmas Poinsettia during Advent and an Easter Lily during Holy Week. This year we expected to deliver about 130 Christmas Poinsettias the week of December 10th.

Each deacon is given two or more plants to deliver to either "at home" members, members who are 90+ years young, church members who have experienced the death of a loved one in the previous 12 months and those members served by our Stephen Ministers. We encourage each deacon to spend some time visiting with and praying for each member who receives a plant. We are oftentimes more blessed than those we set out to serve.

We would like to share a story from The Good News Just Keeps Coming circular about the growing cycle of a poinsettia plant.

Citizens of Brookwood Community (a residential/vocational program for adults with disabilities just west of Houston) begin planning for their community's annual crop of 47,000 poinsettia plants in the fall. The citizens that work in the horticulture greenhouses prepare the potting soil in various containers. Once the soil has been prepared, the seedlings are separated and placed into flats that are moved to temporary growing spaces. After a few weeks, these growing plants are placed in complete darkness to encourage their blooms. In complete darkness for up to 14 hours a day for 40 days. The smallest exposure to light during this time can adversely affect the eventual crop. Perimeter lights, headlights, even a roving flashlight can affect the color and blossoming of the plant. But, when the darkness is respected and endured, the end result is row upon row of brilliant beauty.

Brookwood itself was born out of a dark and uncertain time, its founder the mother of a disabled child who envisioned and sought something more

for her daughter than a lifetime in an institution. Before Brookwood bloomed, there was plenty of darkness; however, despair was turned to hope, beauty came from the ashes and joy did come in the morning after the weeping endured for the night.

We must remember that sometimes God's greatest work is born out of the deepest darkness. As we go and share Christ's love with those who are in the "dark" may we all be reminded that God is still working and He alone knows the time required to nurture and manifest the blooms He envisions.

May it be so!

GLOBAL MISSIONS: TEAM WORLD VISION RUNS AGAIN

RAISING AWARENESS AND RESOURCES FOR CLEAN WATER
BY JOE MOORE, DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS



Last March I was approached by Brian Fraizer to write a letter to local pastors in support of Team World Vision. I told him that I didn't really know anything about it, except that they had really cool bright orange running shirts.

I met Christy Custer and with good intentions I told her that I would at least come out on one of the Saturday training runs to meet and pray for our FPC team. Of course, life happened and I never made it to any trainings.

On the Friday before the Rock n' Roll Marathon, I was privileged to attend the team dinner. As I came face to face with the team members for the first time all I could say was "The least I could do was come out and eat with you." I am glad that I attended that dinner, as I was overwhelmed with the awesome things that come out of running a race.

Each participant and team raises personal and team support and World Vision turns that into clean water for villages all over the world. As I watched the video with runners from all over the world and learned of the impact that clean water brings to a village and how the gospel is presented as a result, I found myself feeling like, "I should do this." I'm just not so sure that I could.

A report Brian shared following the race, from the regional director, said "As of today we have raised over \$263,000! Over \$5,000 of that went to Hurricane Harvey Relief efforts, which means that we will see the remainder implemented to serve at least 5,160 people with access to World Vision's Christ-centered clean

water programs. Plus, we are moving our partnership over to the Run the Alamo 13.1/26.2 in March! To top it all off, our dream has always been to have a full-time person in San Antonio. We needed to hit our targets consistently and prove out the concept of extending our sphere of influence to Austin. After getting approval and undergoing an extensive interview process, I am so happy to announce that Liz Mendoza has joined us full time as your very own Team World Vision Leader!"

Christy Custer, FPC's Team World Vision Captain, wants you to know that it is never too late to get on board with the team and partner together for clean water all over the world.

Clean water leads to healthier families and healthier families lead to open receiving hearts for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

PAT BRODEEN, PRESIDENT



December was a very busy and rewarding month for WOC. We want to thank Bunkie Shed and members of Circle 20, the Circle of Service, who provided goodies for those attending the Advent Festival and assisted other circle members by providing the food for the Christmas Eve Reception. The Reception was truly well received by very grateful pastors, staff, and choir members who worked very hard all day and evening providing a memorable Christmas Eve for all of us. It is our privilege to say “Thank You” to all of them. WOC also thanks Karin Gabrielson and her helpers from Circle 11, who so faithfully host the reception every year.

The Christmas parties for Morningside Manor and Chandler Home are two of the most enjoyable events that WOC has the privilege of providing. Each circle provided cookies and several members to assist with serving the refreshments and visiting with our guests. The Friday Singers and the four year old children from the FPC Children’s Center were dressed in their festive clothes and sung the most delightful songs. After Rev. Scott Simpson read the traditional Christmas story, the adorable children delivered their handmade Christmas cards to our guests, and WOC members gave each guest a handmade ornament created by Circle 8, the Mom’s Group. WOC especially thanks Janet Wernli and Janice Wilson, our event co-chairs, for making all of the arrangements for these parties.

Many thanks to Marilyn Etheredge for providing the craft for the Presbyterian Children’s Home Christmas Party so the children could make an ornament. Marilyn also delivered a fruit and cheese tray for the party and collected fleece blankets to give to all of the children. She also collected small gifts from FPC circle members so the children could “shop” for a gift for their mothers.

January 1, 2018! Another great year to look forward to with more great WOC events! We will kick off with the Winter Ladies Night out at La Fonda on Main, 6:00 PM, January 25. Your check for \$20 is your reservation. There will be a Ladies Night Out table in the lobby beginning January 7.

Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

Phil 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again Rejoice!” May the Joy of the Lord remain with you through the New Year!



WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

CIRCLE MEETINGS

CIRCLE 1/12 BIBLE CIRCLE

Monday, January 22 • 10:30 AM • FPC Geneva Room
Lunch (optional): \$8.00
Chair: Suzanne Thomas (210-820-3245/
suzannethomas54@gmail.com)
Moderator: Grace Labatt
Study: *Women of the Bible* by Ann Spangler and
Jean E. Syswerda

CIRCLE 2/4 BIBLE CIRCLE

Tuesday, January 16 • 1:30 PM • FPC Room 226
Chair: Char-An Witten (210-341-1856)
Moderator: Members of Circle 2/4
Study: *Women of the Bible* by Ann Spangler and
Jean E. Syswerda

CIRCLE 5 SHAWL MINISTRY

Friday, January 19 • 12:00 PM • FPC Room 228
Chairs: Jane Ann Temple (210-828-7542/jatemple@att.net)
Kay Weber (210-288-5290/kayweber276@gmail.com)

CIRCLE 6 BIBLE CIRCLE

Tuesday, January 16 • 1:30 PM • FPC Geneva Room
Chair: Mimi Hart (210-822-0809/mimihart@me.com)
Moderators: Jane Buchek, Kay Case, June Eubank,
Barbara Winship
Study: *Intersections of Grace* by Susan Kerr,
“Called in the Meantime” Chapter 27: Waiting

CIRCLE 7 BIBLE CIRCLE

Tuesday, January 16 • 11:30 AM
Hostess: Cynthia Robinson
(7902 Woodridge Dr., SA 78209)
Bring Sack Lunch
Chair: Caren Redkey (210-531-6366, clredkey@gmail.com)
Moderators: Members of Circle 7
Study: *Intersections of Grace* by Susan Kerr,
“Called in the Meantime” Chapter 27: Waiting

CIRCLE 8 MOMS’ GROUP

No Daytime Meetings
Contact Circle Chairs for Moms’ Night Out Information
Chairs: Sara Parish (210-394-0865/sara23sc@hotmail.com)
Lilly Gretzinger (210-601-0575/lilly@bunnngroup.com)
Meg Walker (210-601-7745/meg@aladdinleans.com)

CIRCLE 9 BIBLE CIRCLE

Tuesday, January 16 • 10:00 AM
Hostess: Frances Warrick (18607 Rogers Place 78258)
Chairs: Jan Magnus (210-829-5866/jmagnus3@mac.com)
Frances Warrick (210-408-1775/fwarrick@sbcglobal.net)
Moderators: Members of Circle 9

Study: *Intersections of Grace* by Susan Kerr,
“Called in the Meantime” Chapter 27: Waiting

CIRCLE 11 BIBLE CIRCLE

Monday, January 22 • 6:30 PM •
Hostess: Jackie Richards (16330 Axis Trail 78232)
Chair: Karin Gabrielson (210-843-2475/karin_gabriel-
son@hotmail.com)
Moderators: Members of Circle 11
Study: *Intersections of Grace* by Susan Kerr,
“Called in the Meantime” Chapter 27: Waiting

CIRCLE 13 CHRISTIANITY AND LITERATURE CIRCLE

Tuesday, January 9 • 1:00 PM • FPC McCullough Room
Chair: Jan Magnus (210-829-5866/jmagnus3@mac.com)
Book: *Delayed Legacy* by Conrad Netting
Reviewer: Conrad Netting

CIRCLE 14 BIBLE CIRCLE

Monday, January 22 • 12:00 PM • FPC St. Andrew’s Room
Chair: Marilyn Etheredge (210-862-4314/
mmorris.etheredge@yahoo.com)
Study: *Women of the Bible* by Ann Spangler and
Jean E. Syswerda

CIRCLE 16 MARJORIE MCLERNON SEWING CIRCLE

Wednesday, January 17 • 9:30 AM • FPC Room 228
Chair: Lee Pressley, 210-735-0978

CIRCLE 17 EDNA RALSTON SEWING CIRCLE

Wednesday, January 10 • 9:30 AM • FPC Room 309
Chair: Jeanne Baker (210-494-0972/
rbaker127@sbcglobal.net; Gigi Duke (210-695-4363)

CIRCLE 18 CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE

No meetings
Chairs: Char-An Witten (210-341-1856); Georgia Heath,
(210-695-9511/gkhymheath@earthlink.net)

CIRCLE 19 WHITE CROSS CIRCLE

Wednesday, January 3 • 9:30 AM • FPC Room 309
Chair: Janet Beauch (210-673-3251/tabeauch@flash.net)

CIRCLE 20 CIRCLE OF SERVICE

No meetings
Chair: Bunkie Shed
(210-445-0724/bshed@grandecom.net)

KEYS

JOE MOORE, OLDER ADULTS DIRECTOR

KEYS ended the year busy and strong!! Our Christmas Party featuring the FPC Friday Singers packed Westminster Hall. Gifts were collected for our Christmas Family, and Elf Louise volunteers enjoyed the Mid-day Noels and lunch at the church before demonstrating their wrapping expertise. Last but not least, we enjoyed dinner at Casa Rio and a chilly boat tour of the San Antonio River Christmas Lights.

We will not lose steam in the New Year, beginning with our Bus Trip to attend the Boar's Head & Yule Log Festival in Corpus Christi on January 6th. Rev Dr. Bob Fuller will be our first speaker on January 12th, sharing "The State of The Church." You may hear things here you might not hear anywhere else.

Sharpen up your driving skills and get an insurance discount by taking the AARP Safe Driving Course on January 18th. Our Birthday Luncheon will actually be at the Fort Sam Golf Club on January 19th. Ending the month on January 26th, Guide Dogs of Texas will demonstrate how they train dogs to be enlisted into service.



FEBRUARY EVENTS

- FEBRUARY 2:**
Rick Cavender Tour of the Greatest Hits of the 50s and 60s
- FEBRUARY 9:**
Marcia Waldgeir, to speak on Trafficked Teens
- FEBRUARY 16:**
Valentine's Day Luncheon at the Menger
- FEBRUARY 23:**
Bexar County Buffalo Soldiers Association

TO JOIN US FOR ANY KEYS EVENT:
Contact Stephanie Garcia at 210-271-2753 or stephanieg@fpcsat.org.



JANUARY EVENTS

JANUARY 6: Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival Trip
This celebration of the holiday in music, drama and dance has been presented by the First Christian Church as a gift to the Corpus Christi community for many years. The Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival is perhaps the oldest continuing festival of the Christmas season. The only admission requested is canned food for their Food Bank. A great way to celebrate Epiphany. Cost: \$76.00 Includes transportation on charter Regent Coach, lunch at the Glass Pavilion in the Omni Hotel, driver tip and guides, Susan & Henry Holloway. Departing at 11:00 AM—Returning at approximately 7:30 PM.

JANUARY 12: Rev. Dr. Bob Fuller to speak
We look forward to hearing from our new senior pastor, Dr. Fuller, who will speak concerning "The State of The Church." Bob came to FPC in September of 2016 to serve as Assistant Pastor for Christian Education. In January 2017, he became co-pastor and in January 2018 he became senior pastor.

JANUARY 18: AARP Safe Driving Class
Will be offered from 9:00 AM-1:30 PM. Completing this class not only helps to improve your driving skills but also gives you a discount on your auto insurance. Cost is \$15 for AARP Members and \$20 for non-members.

JANUARY 19: Birthday Lunch at Fort Sam Golf Club
Enjoy Chicken Picatta or Sliced Roast Beef with Mushroom Gravy. Cost is \$12 per person. Meet at Fort Sam Golf Club at 11:30 AM or take the Van from FPC at 10:45 AM.

JANUARY 26: Guide Dogs of Texas
The only guide dog school in the Lone Star state. They provide guide dogs to visually impaired Texans as well as offering unique client services such as specialized matching, training and follow-up. Each of their dogs is specially bred, raised and trained.



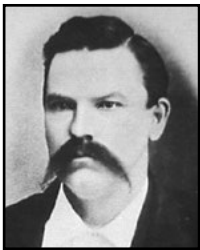
HISTORY CORNER: A CHURCH FOR THE CITY

BY BILL COGBURN



John Neil

From early in our church’s history, First Presbyterian has had a reputation for being “a church for the city” caring for those on the margins of society. One of the most notable examples of this legacy was the ministry of Rev. John Witherspoon Neil who was called by First Pres to be their pastor in January of 1872.



Jack Harris

Just seven years after the end of the Civil War, the church, the city and indeed the entire country was struggling to recover from the devastation brought on by the war. A positive sign of economic improvement was the congregation’s offer to Dr. Neil—a respectable salary of \$1,200 per year.

Early in Neil’s leadership, the church was able to pay off an old debt of \$3,500 while still making plans to finish the stone church at Houston and Flores streets which was begun in 1860 by Reverend Bunting. While Dr. Neil had a congregation to minister to, he also felt a strong calling to reach out to the community’s poor and needy, as well as those of questionable respectability such as prostitutes and gamblers.

Perhaps the most notorious character in San Antonio’s shady underside was Jack Harris who operated the Jack Harris Vaudeville Theatre and Saloon located at the northwest corner of W. Commerce and Soledad streets. His establishment was said to be the most popular place in the city, catering to San Antonio’s “sporting crowd.” By the late 1870s, Harris had become one of the city’s most politically powerful men.

In 1880, Ben Thompson, noted gunslinger, gambler and Austin saloonkeeper spent an evening at Harris’ theatre. He lost heavily and left in an angry mood shouting threats, swearing that he would have his revenge. Harris made it known that Thompson was no longer welcome in his saloon.

On July 11, 1882, Thompson, by then the city marshal of Austin, returned to San Antonio proclaiming that he was going to shut down Harris’ establishment. Harris had been warned and was waiting inside the slatted doors of his saloon. As Thompson paused on the sidewalk to let two ladies pass, he saw Harris just inside the door.

Heated remarks were exchanged and before Harris could raise his shotgun, Thompson drew his six-shooter and fired through the swinging door hitting Harris near his heart, killing him.

The obituary in the Light commended Harris’ “liberality, shrewdness and tact” which “made him the real leader of the Democratic Party” and “there’s no city officer and hardly a county officer that does not owe his office to this man’s influence and sagacity from the mayor on down and from county judge to court bailiffs.” The Light went on to say “in the eyes of religious people, he was a wicked man and he died, apparently an unrepentant sinner. Crowds of people stood on street corners to watch the long procession pass down Commerce Street, led by the pastor of First Presbyterian Church.”

Rev. John Neil died April 25, 1891. Not only did his family, friends, and congregation mourn his death but a unique tribute was paid him when every saloon and gambling house in town closed down for his funeral.

The Express News printed the following tribute on April 26, 1891: “Probably no man in the city of San Antonio was more universally loved and respected. For all of those years he occupied the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio, his ministry was not confined to his own denomination. He was the friend of the poor, the afflicted and the needy. The gambler and desperado have died outside the congregation of the Lord and yet, over the unrepentant dead, he was the man to perform the rites of a Christian burial.”

“He was learned, cultivated, pious, and exemplary, saturated from head to foot with kindest Christian charity. During his almost twenty years in our city, not a gambler or prostitute died in San Antonio but Dr. Neil preached the sermon at the grave. When no carriage was furnished, he went on foot through mud or dust. He never asked a cent for his services and always spoke of a dead man or woman as his dear brother or sister. Some of his gatherings in the cemetery, where desperado elbowed courtesan, have become historic. He was a small, bent, gray man with an honest face, perpetually in bad health, but of tireless industry in doing good.”

Source: San Antonio Light July 12, 1882, Texas State Historical Assn.; Donald Everett’s, Adobe Walls to Stone Edifice; Muriel Forbes’, First Presbyterian Church – One Hundredth Anniversary 1846-1946; Alice Evett’s, Fatal Corner; Express, April 26, 1891; Light July 12, 1882.



BEYOND THE STAINED GLASS

BECKY PRICHARD, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

Happy New Year! Here we find ourselves again at the beginning of a brand new year. A fresh start, a new beginning, a chance to do things differently. But wait...why is January always such a hard month for so many of us? January has always been one of my least favorite months of the year. I am not sure if it is because of the post-holiday blues or if there is too much pressure to starting the New Year on the right foot.

Either way, for all my years growing up, I dreaded New Year’s Eve because it seemed like something magical was supposed to happen when the clock struck midnight. Everyone counts down the seconds until 12:00 AM when the New Year hits and it always seems like nothing changes. A big fat let down.

I seem to still have the same nagging issues at 12:00 AM that I did at 11:59 PM the year before. I still have the same fears and doubts that have always followed me, and I still experience the same loneliness and emptiness that comes with living earth side.

In addition to that, many of us make these New Year Resolutions that come with a lot of energy and excitement on January 1 and quickly burn out by the end of the month. We think that if we go to the gym more or eat less sugar or go to church more often, that we will be happier in the New Year. But it does not take long to realize that being thin does not take sadness and fear away and we go right back to our same old habits.

There is no magic in beginning a new year. It is not that going to the gym or eating less sugar or going to church more are bad things. In fact, those are healthy habits to incorporate into our lives. But if we place all of our hope and happiness in those external things, then we will constantly be left feeling empty. All the bad does not just disappear the moment the clock strikes midnight. Here’s the deal: we cannot put our hope in the changing of the calendar. Our hope must rest in God who sits at the throne over the entire universe.

Once I stopped buying into the lies the world tells us about New Year’s Eve, I remembered the promises of God told to us through Scripture. God prom-

ised to send a son, Jesus Christ, to this earth to live amongst us as fully human and fully divine and die on a cross in our place so that we might be free from sin. Scripture says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” This is a promise that we can trust. This is the new life given to us not because the clock turned from 11:59 PM to 12:00 AM, but a new life that is eternal.

If we read on in the passage in 2 Corinthians, we discover the intricate promises of God from the beginning of time, all orchestrated for our reconciliation and renewal through Christ. And because of that, we become ambassadors for Christ and share this Good News with all we encounter.

Reconciliation and renewal are ultimately what we are all looking for when we change the calendar to the New Year. But instead of wishing on a date change, let’s enjoy the truth of the promises that God has already given us. These gifts are free! We do not have to go to the gym and get in shape to enjoy the new life that God offers us through Christ.

So as we head into the New Year, 2018, let us cling to the promises of God and enjoy the new life given to us in Christ. Let us be ambassadors for Christ and share this unending hope with the world.


Happy New Year!

FIRST CUP READINGS JANUARY, 2018

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 and Claire Averyt



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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

- 1 Ecclesiastes 3:1-17; Psalm 119:81-112; 103
- 2 Hebrews 1; John 1:1-14; Galatians 3:26-4:4
- 3 Hebrews 2; Philippians 2:1-11; 2 Timothy 1:8-12
- 4 Hebrews 3; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; John 3:35-36
- 5 Hebrews 4:1-13; Exodus 20:8-11; Ephesians 2:8-10;
Romans 4:1-8
- 6 Hebrews 4:14-5:10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Romans 6

Mighty God, while angels bless Thee, may a mortal sing Thy name? Lord of men as well as angels, Thou art every creature's theme. Lord of every land and nation, ancient of eternal days, Sounded thru the wide creation be Thy just and endless praise. Brightness of the Father's glory, shall Thy praise unuttered lie? Break, my tongue, such guilty silence! Sing the Lord who came to die. From the highest throne of glory to the cross of deepest woe, All to ransom guilty captives; flow my praise, forever flow! (The Hymnbook, No. 10)

- 7 Hebrews 5:11-6:6; 1 Peter 2:2; I Corinthians 3:1-4;
Matthew 7:21-23; 26:47-49
- 8 Hebrews 6:7-20; Isaiah 5:1-7; 44; 55:10-13;
Matthew 13:1-30
- 9 Genesis 14:17-20; Psalm 110; Hebrews 7; Romans 8:26-27
- 10 1 Peter 2; Revelation 1:4-6; 5:6-10; 20:4-6
- 11 Hebrews 8 (see Exodus 25-31); Jeremiah 31;
2 Corinthians 5:17
- 12 Hebrews 9:1-10; Exodus 40; Leviticus 16; Romans 3:21-26
- 13 Leviticus 8, 17; Hebrews 9:11-28; Matthew 5:17;
Romans 8:1-17

'Tis the grandest theme thro' the ages rung; 'tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue; 'Tis the grandest theme that the world e'er sung: Our God is able to deliver thee. 'Tis the grandest theme in the earth or main; 'tis the grandest theme for a mortal strain; 'Tis the grandest theme, tell the world again: Our God is able to deliver thee. (The Baptist Hymnal, No. 198)

- 14 Hebrews 10:1-25; 7:26-28; Matthew 26:26-29;
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- 15 Hebrews 10:26-39; 2 Peter 2; Matthew 12:31-32;
Ephesians 4:30-32
- 16 Hebrews 11; Isaiah 7:9b; Revelation 6:9-11; 1 Peter 1:1-12
- 17 Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27;
Philippians 2; Galatians 6:9
- 18 Hebrews 12:4-13; 2 Corinthians 4-5:10; Psalm 94

- 19 Hebrews 12:14-17; Ephesians 4:17-5:20
20 Hebrews 12:18-29 (see Exodus 19-20);
Philippians 3:7-4:1; 2 Peter 3:10-18

Oh soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's light for a look at the Savior, And life more abundant and free! Thro' death into life everlasting He passed, and we follow Him there. Over us sin no more hath dominion- For more than conquerors we are! His Word shall not fail you-He promised; Believe Him, and all will be well. Then go to a world that is dying, His perfect salvation to tell! Turn your eyes upon Jesus; look full in His wonderful face; and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. (Worship in Song, No. 207)


- 21 Hebrews 13:1-6; Romans 12:9-21; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:9-11; Matthew 6:24
- 22 Hebrews 13:7-25; 1 Thessalonians 4-5
- 23 James 1:1-8; Romans 5:1-5; Job 28:20-28; Psalm 90:12; Proverbs 1:7; 8; 21:30
- 24 James 1:9-11; Psalm 49; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 18:18-30; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; 17-19
- 25 James 1:12-18; Matthew 6:9-13; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 10:12-13; Galatians 6:1-16
- 26 James 1:19-27; Psalm 4:4; Ephesians 4:17-32; Proverbs 15:1; 29:11
- 27 James 2:1-13; Leviticus 19:15; Proverbs 3; 14:21; Luke 10:25-37

While passing thro' this world of sin, and others your life shall view, Be clean and pure without, within, let others see Jesus in you. Your life's a book before their eyes, they're reading it thro' and thro'; Say, does it point them to the skies, do others see Jesus in you? Let others see Jesus in you, let others see Jesus in you; Keep telling the story, be faithful and true, let others see Jesus in you. (The Baptist Hymnal, No. 348)

- 28 James 2:14-26; Ephesians 2:8-10; Matthew 7:21-27; 25
29 James 3:1-12; Proverbs 4; 12:19; 16:23-30; 18:6-8;
26:20-28; 27:2; Psalm 12; 141
30 James 3:13-18; Proverbs 29:23; Matthew 20:20-28;
23:1-12; Luke 22:24-30
31 James 4:1-12; Proverbs 10:18-21;
Matthew 15:10-20; Titus 2:11-15; 1 John 2:1-17

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).

A white ceramic cup filled with a latte, featuring a heart-shaped latte art design on the surface. The cup sits on a matching white saucer, and a small silver spoon is placed on the saucer next to the cup.

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