



**FIRST  
PRESS**

December  
Christmas Music  
Tradition with  
Midday Noels  
(see page 7)

Children's Ministry  
Celebrations &  
Shoobox Sunday  
(See pages 8-9)

**DECEMBER 2023**

Happy Birthday, Jesus!  
(See Pastor's Article page 2)

# Christmas at First

Order a Poinsettia to  
Honor or Remember  
Loved Ones  
(See the form on page 12)

December is a busy month!  
Get the FPC dates on your  
calendar.  
(Save the Dates on pages 4-6)

**Experience  
Christmas at FPC  
San Antonio!**

(see feature articles pages 10-11)





## Pastor's Article

# Happy Birthday, Jesus!

REV. DR. BOB FULLER

*"Born to you this day in the city of David is the savior, which is Christ the Lord." - Luke 2:11*

Today is my birthday. It is also my Dad's (Bobby Fuller's) birthday as well. I am writing this just a few days ahead of the first Sunday in Advent, as we all prepare to celebrate Jesus' birthday. As you might imagine, "birthday thoughts" are much on the top of my mind right now.

One of my Dad's favorite Bibles is a pocket-size New English Version New Testament that was given to him in 1976. Dad would never write in a Bible, but any Bible he owns is stuffed with little bits of paper on which he has written miscellaneous notes. One of the notes stuffed in this Bible was an Advent devotional he wrote for his church's church newsletter in 1989 (when I was a sophomore in college). It is titled, "Happy Birthday, Jesus."

\*\*\*\*\*

What do we have in mind when we approach the "birthday" of Jesus? Several thoughts occur.

With Christmas we tend to really concentrate on the "birth" day to a far greater extent than is our custom with the celebration of birthdays in general. The birth of Jesus is momentous. That event is singular in all history. His birth is worthy of celebration.

There is danger, however, in focusing entirely on Jesus' birth. A tendency to worship the baby in the manger somehow fails to give full expression to the meaning of Christmas. Prophecy foretold the birth. But more, prophecy



foretold the coming of The Messiah, the One who would be the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. The significant impact of Christmas cannot be seen in the baby's birth without a simultaneous vision of the Lord's resurrection.

Each of us celebrates birthdays of family members and friends. In each of these events we celebrate the life of the honoree as it now is. We acknowledge our love relationship with our kin and friends in a present tense. The emphasis is more upon the present day and less upon the actual day of birthing.

Even in the instance of the commemoration of birthdays of our great dignitaries, the central emphasis is upon the purpose and the significance of the life of the one commemorated and not upon the act of his birth.

On one's twenty-first birthday, we do not honor him by the gift of a crib toy. Nor on the anniversary of Lincoln's birth do we concentrate our attention on a backwoods infant.

Should we approach Christmas any less "presently"? He is here. Wherever His people are gathered in His name, Jesus attends His party.

As Christian greets Christian the "Merry Christmas" is translated "Happy Birthday, Jesus." As we celebrate Christmas as the birthday of Jesus Christ, let's do so with the expectancy that He is at the party too - not as He was but as He is. He is not present as a helpless babe wrapped in swaddling clothes but as the Living Lord, so totally sufficient in Himself that death could not hold Him. Let's act on Christmas as if we do believe the tenets of our faith:

REJOICE:

HE IS RISEN;

HE IS LORD;

HE IS PRESENT.

I don't necessarily think of Jesus aging year by year, but I do think of Him as always present with me. That is a far more comfortable hope than making a wish and blowing out candles on a cake.

Happy Birthday Jesus!

\*\*\*\*\*

Grace and Peace, and  
Merry Christmas!



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First Press is a monthly publication from the FPC Communications Team.

Want to be featured in FIRST PRESS?

Deadline to submit content: the 15th of the previous month.

Hank Cherry: **Director of Communications**

Dorothy Hecimovich: **Graphic Designer**

Edwin Stephens: **Media/AV Manager**

Robynn Amy: **Media/Production Specialist**

Nona Hall: **Volunteer Photographer**

**Questions? Contact:** Hank Cherry  
 (210-271-2728/[hankc@fpcsat.org](mailto:hankc@fpcsat.org))



# Save the Date

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2

### YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
 Location: Student Center  
 Contact: Kyle Bowden, [kyleb@fpcsat.org](mailto:kyleb@fpcsat.org)  
 Kerri Napoli, [kerrin@fpcsat.org](mailto:kerrin@fpcsat.org)  
 Preston Miller, [prestonm@fpcsat.org](mailto:prestonm@fpcsat.org)

Description: Celebrate the end of the school year and kick off the holiday season by joining us for our Youth Christmas Party! Students will make Christmas crafts, play games, and participate in a White Elephant gift exchange.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

### ROAD CLOSURES FOR MARATHON

Time: 5:00 AM - 9:00 AM  
 Location: Downtown Streets

Description: Please plan to use Hwy 281/IH-37 to access and leave church on the morning of December 3 to avoid road closures downtown due to the annual Rock 'n' Roll Marathon held that morning. Visit [fpcsanantonio.org/road-closures](http://fpcsanantonio.org/road-closures) for the map.

### ADVENT FESTIVAL

Time: 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
 Location: Westminster Hall  
 Contact: Rebecca Sweet, [rebeccas@fpcsat.org](mailto:rebeccas@fpcsat.org)

Description: Free event for all ages! Come explore the sights and sounds of Christmas as FPC hosts the annual Advent Festival. Childcare available for babies through 3 years by reservations.

### LOVE SATX CHRISTMAS PROJECT

Description: This Christmas, we're excited to come alongside four of our local missions partners: CAM (Christian Assistance Ministry), the GoodHood, the KRL (Kingdom Restoration Lab), and Young Life SA East. Volunteer signups are available online throughout December for the CAM Christmas Store. Visit [fpcsanantonio.org/christmas-giving](http://fpcsanantonio.org/christmas-giving) for ways you can love our city this Christmas Season. See [page 11](#) for more information.

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 4

### YOUNG ADULT COMMUNITIES CHRISTMAS PARTY

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
 Location: 339 E Huisache Ave.  
 Contact: Carrie Everson, 210-226-0215  
[carrie@fpcsat.org](mailto:carrie@fpcsat.org)

Description: Cabo Bob's provided! Wear your ugliest Christmas sweater, and bring a White Elephant gift, friend, and drink/dessert if possible. We look forward to celebrating with you! Text Chris at 210-782-3687 with any questions.

## THURSDAYS, DECEMBER 7, 14, 21

### MID-DAY NOELS

Time: 12:00 PM – 12:45 PM  
 Location: FPC Sanctuary  
 Contact: Tom Dooling, 210-271-2717  
[tomd@fpcsat.org](mailto:tomd@fpcsat.org)

Description: Save the dates for this beloved holiday concert tradition and join us for our musical “gift to the city” during Advent. See [page 7](#) for more information.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

### CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Time: 11:00 AM Traditional Service  
 Location: Sanctuary  
 Contact: Rebecca Sweet, [rebeccas@fpcsat.org](mailto:rebeccas@fpcsat.org)

Description: A Savior has been born! He is Christ the Lord! Come hear the story of God's love told through our FPC children during the combined 11:00 AM Traditional Service (no 11:00 AM Modern Service). We will have our regular Traditional and Modern 9:30 AM services earlier in the morning.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

### CALLED CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Time: After All Three Services

Description: Called Congregational meeting to approve proposed officer nomination committee members will be held during all three services (9:30 AM Modern, 9:30 AM Traditional, & 11:00 AM Children's Pageant.)



## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

### POINSETTIA ORDER DEADLINE

Time: Sunday Mornings  
Location: Table in Mauzé Lobby

Description: Remember loved ones, honor individuals, or celebrate an occasion with a \$15 poinsettia plant. The committee is also selling ornaments featuring two of our stained glass windows for \$10 each. Forms & ornaments available at Sunday table. You may also get forms in the church workroom, at [fpcsanantonio.org/poinsettias](https://fpcsanantonio.org/poinsettias), or on [page 12](#) of this First Press issue. Return form with payment to the Sanctuary Flower Committee mailbox in the 2nd floor workroom.

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

### DECEMBER LITERATURE CIRCLE

Time: 1:30 PM (Social starts at 1:00 PM)  
Location: McCullough Room  
Contact: Grace Clouse, Chair,  
[grace.clouse42@gmail.com](mailto:grace.clouse42@gmail.com)

Description: Featuring a review by Tripp Stuart of "Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty." "The Commodore's [Cornelius Vanderbilt's] great-great-grandson, Anderson Cooper, joins with historian Katherine Howe to explore the story of his legendary family, their outsized influence, and the triumphs and tragedies of an American dynasty unlike any other." Visit [fpcsanantonio.org/lit-circle](https://fpcsanantonio.org/lit-circle).

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

### SUNDAY MORNING & CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Two morning Advent Services at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM with four Christmas Eve Services at 2:30 PM, 5:00 PM, 7:30 PM, & 10:00 PM. There will be no Sunday School Classes on Christmas Eve morning. Classes will resume Sunday, January 7. More detailed information on [page 10](#).

## DECEMBER 25, 2023 - JANUARY 1, 2024

### CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED

During the Christmas and New Year's holidays the offices will be closed Monday - Friday, December 25 - 29 as well as Monday, January 1.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

### NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE

11:00 AM One worship service in Westminster Hall  
There will be no Sunday School Classes on the morning of New Year's Day. Classes will resume Sunday, January 7.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

### NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS: OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY - GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION THROUGH HISTORY

Time: 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM  
Location: Room 300  
Contact: Carrie Everson, [carrie@fpcsat.org](mailto:carrie@fpcsat.org)

Description: Take a journey with us through the Old Testament so that you can become more aware of God's plan of redemption from Creation until the time of Christ. We will be using the "CASKET EMPTY" curriculum. Books and an Old Testament Timeline will be available for purchase for those who would like them.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 14

### ONE LOVE: AN INTERGENERATIONAL SUNDAY CLASS ON MARRIAGE

Time: 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM  
Location: Room 309

Description: A 6-week class designed to empower couples recently, or soon to be, married with gospel truth through intergenerational wisdom.

## JANUARY 19 - 21, 2024

### MEN'S RETREAT 2024

Location: LoneHollow Ranch

Description: Join us for an incredible weekend in the Texas Hill Country together to kick off the year! You'll enjoy vibrant worship, rich community with other men in the FPC family, and a great speaker who will lead us through the weekend as we grow together in the Lord. For more information and to register go to [fpcsanantonio.org/men-retreat](https://fpcsanantonio.org/men-retreat).



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 21****DISCOVER, KNOW & JOIN FPC!****DiscoverFPC! Class** - Jan. 21 | 12:15 PM – 2:00 PM**KnowFPC! Class** - Feb 4 | 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Contact: Sheila Figueroa, 210-271-2759

[sheilaf@fpcsat.org](mailto:sheilaf@fpcsat.org)

Description: Are you interested in learning more about FPC or become a Covenant Partner? Sign up and attend a Sunday DiscoverFPC! class where you can then decide whether you are ready to join as a Covenant Partner or wish to wait. Ready to join? Register for both the DiscoverFPC & KnowFPC classes and learn more about joining FPC at [fpcsanantonio.org/join](http://fpcsanantonio.org/join).

**MONDAY, JANUARY 22****YAC GOSPEL COMMUNITY GATHERING**

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Location: Student Center Downstairs

Contact: Carrie Everson, 210-226-0215

[carrie@fpcsat.org](mailto:carrie@fpcsat.org)

Description: Monthly gathering for young adults of all ages and stages (1/22, 2/26, 3/18, 4/22, & 5/20). Dinner is served at 6:30 PM and the program begins at 7:00 PM. The gathering will include teaching, food, fellowship, and fun!

**JANUARY 26-28****LOVE REBOOT WITH JON ANDERSON**

Time: 8:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Location: FPC Campus

Description: All marriages go through times of struggle. This weekend is specifically for when you are feeling distant and I conflict with each other. This is the BEST way to find your way back to love and intimacy with your spouse. It's worth investing your time and money in this weekend to restore what is broken. [growinglovenetwork.org/courses](http://growinglovenetwork.org/courses)



**CONNECT**  
with FPC MISSIONS

Text "Missions" to 210-981-3339  
to receive updates about ongoing and upcoming opportunities  
to connect and serve with our FPC Mission Partners.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 30****WOC WINTER LADIES' NIGHT OUT**

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Paloma Blanca, 5800 Broadway, 78209

Contact: Jill Peavy, 210-667-0525

[jill.peavy@gmail.com](mailto:jill.peavy@gmail.com)

Description: Treat yourself to a Ladies Night Out at Paloma Blanca hosted by the Women of the Church. \$25 registration coming soon! Bring a friend, and come make new friends! We will have lots of terrific door prizes too! Watch [fpcsanantonio.org/woc](http://fpcsanantonio.org/woc) for up to date information.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9 -****SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024****HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT**

Time &amp; Location: TBD

Contact: Kyle Bowden, [kyleb@fpcsat.org](mailto:kyleb@fpcsat.org)Kerri Napoli, [kerrin@fpcsat.org](mailto:kerrin@fpcsat.org)Preston Miller, [prestonm@fpcsat.org](mailto:prestonm@fpcsat.org)

Description: All students and friends of students grades 9-12 are invited to join us for a fun weekend for our annual Retreat! Activities will include team building exercises, good food and snacks, fellowship, and so much more.

**MARCH 22 - MARCH 23, 2024****"A PRAYING LIFE"****CHURCHWIDE SEMINAR**

Time: TBD

Location: First Presbyterian Church Campus

Contact: Kim Smith, [KimDCSmith@yahoo.com](mailto:KimDCSmith@yahoo.com)Ginny Porata, [ginnyvan490@gmail.com](mailto:ginnyvan490@gmail.com)

Description: Registration coming soon for this churchwide seminar on prayer led by the SeeJesus Ministry. This seminar is not for victorious Christians, but Christians defeated in the trenches, asking... How do I focus when I'm distracted with so much to do? How do I pray longer than five minutes? How do I ask when I've tried it before and it doesn't work? Delving into our frustrations, we look at Jesus' powerful yet simple teachings on prayer. Further practical tools and helps are explained and demonstrated. Throughout the sessions people have time to pray, making real what they learned.



*The Music Ministry of  
First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio  
Presents their Annual*

# *Midday Noels*

## *Concert Series*

**A Seasonal Celebration of Merry Melodies and Holiday Harmonies**  
**Thursday, December 7, 14, & 21 | 12:00 PM - 12:45 PM**

Once again, FPC offers its holiday 'gift to the city' with a variety of creative musical offerings. In addition to in-person seating, all three concerts will be streamed live at [fpcsanantonio.org/noels](https://fpcsanantonio.org/noels) and will be available for viewing on our YouTube channel after the concert. Following the concert, we will be offering a hot lunch (\$15) in Westminster Hall or 'Grab and Go' lunches (\$5), available in the sanctuary foyer. For more details about this free concert series, please visit [fpcsanantonio.org/noels](https://fpcsanantonio.org/noels).

- **Thursday, December 7 - 'Hear the Bells Ring and Hear Voices Sing!'**  
FPC Music Ministry Handbell Choir and Chamber Singer Ensemble
- **Thursday, December 14 - 'A European Christmas with Bronwyn White'**  
Opera singer and recitalist Bronwyn White, member of FPC Sanctuary Choir when not traveling to perform in opera and symphony concerts around the country.
- **Thursday, December 21 - 'Shimmering Brass with the Castle Brass Quintet'**  
Castle Brass Quintet, a brass quintet featuring some of the finest freelance professional musicians in the San Antonio area. The ensemble is comprised of two trumpets, French horn, trombone, tuba, and percussion and is led by Jeff Castle, a United States Air Force veteran and trumpet teacher at The University of Texas San Antonio and Trinity University.



**For More Information &  
Live Streamed Video Each Week,  
Visit [fpcsanantonio.org/noels](https://fpcsanantonio.org/noels)**

*Music at*  
**FIRST**  
Celebrating Our Ministry of Music

404 N ALAMO ST  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78205  
210-226-0215



# Celebrating with the



Exciting things have been going on in the Children's Ministry area. Come and see for yourself!

On October 29, the children had a "Noah's Ark Dress-Up Parade" visiting the adult Sunday school classes where we treated them with a class sign and a song.

There were beetles, tigers, cats, and flamingos, along with other animals, all on parade throughout the church hallways. It was such a great success.

Be on the lookout next year on Sunday, October 27 for another parade!

On November 18, the children enjoyed breakfast tacos and then went right to work learning about Operation Christmas Child. They packed lots and lots of boxes for children around the world.

This is a wonderful ministry of Samaritan's Purse where children around the world are given a surprise box full of toys and supplies and the greatest gift ever- an opportunity to come to know Jesus!

In total (with the boxes from the congregation), we had 179 boxes packed! Woo Hoo!!! Thank you all who help with this wonderful outreach.

We are looking forward to celebrating the coming birth of Jesus with two events in December: the annual Advent Festival on Sunday, December 3, beginning at 3:00 PM in Westminster Hall, and the Children's Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 10, at 11:00 AM in the Sanctuary. Thank you to all the volunteers who help make these annual celebrations so special and memorable for our children, their families, and the whole congregation!

*Rebecca Sweet*

Director of Children's Ministry  
[rebeccas@fpcsat.org](mailto:rebeccas@fpcsat.org)







**FPC CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ANNUAL**

# **ADVENT FESTIVAL**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3**

**3:00 PM - 5:00 PM | WESTMINSTER HALL**

Free event for all ages to explore the sights and sounds of Christmas!  
 Childcare is available by reservation for babies through 3 years.  
 Contact Rebecca Sweet, [rebeccas@fpcsat.org](mailto:rebeccas@fpcsat.org)

**VOLUNTEER! SIGN UP AT [BIT.LY/ADVENTFEST23](https://bit.ly/adventfest23)**

**For unto us a child is born!**



**Children's Christmas Pageant - December 10, 2023**  
**11:00 AM Traditional Service**



# Christmas at First

WE WELCOME YOU TO EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS WITH FPC  
AS WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

[fpcsanantonio.org/christmas](http://fpcsanantonio.org/christmas)

## Dec. 3 - ADVENT FESTIVAL

**3:00 PM – 5:00 PM | Westminster Hall**

Free event for all ages! Come explore the sights and sounds of Christmas at FPC's annual Advent Festival. Reserve free childcare for babies through 3 yrs. by emailing [rebeccas@fpcsat.org](mailto:rebeccas@fpcsat.org).

## Dec. 7, 14, & 21 (Thursdays) MIDDAY NOELS

**12:00-12:45 PM | Sanctuary & [fpcsanantonio.org/noels](http://fpcsanantonio.org/noels)**

We offer our holiday "gift to the city" with three free concerts followed by a choice of a hot lunch (\$15) in our Westminster Hall or "Grab & Go" (\$5) in the Sanctuary foyer.

**Dec. 7 | "Hear the Bells Ring and Hear Voices Sing!"**  
featuring FPC Handbells and Chamber Choir

**Dec. 14 | "A European Christmas with Opera Singer Bronwyn White"**

**Dec. 21 | "Shimmering Brass with the Castle Brass Quintet"**

Email [rebeccas@fpcsat.org](mailto:rebeccas@fpcsat.org) to reserve free childcare for babies through 3 yrs.

## Dec. 10 - CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

**11:00 AM Traditional Service**

**Sanctuary & [fpcsanantonio.org](http://fpcsanantonio.org)**

A Savior has been born! He is Christ the Lord! Come hear the story of God's love told by our FPC children during the 11:00 AM Traditional Service. One service only at 11:00 AM. Will have both regular 9:30 AM Worship Services.

## Dec. 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE

We hope to see you, your family & friends during this most wonderful time of the year.

### 4th Sunday in Advent Morning Services

No morning Sunday School classes, childcare available during both morning services (babies - kinder.)

- **9:30 AM | Traditional** in the Sanctuary
- **11:00 AM | Modern** in Westminster Hall

### Christmas Eve Services

Email [rebeccas@fpcsat.org](mailto:rebeccas@fpcsat.org) to reserve free childcare for Christmas Eve afternoon and evening services (babies through 3 yrs.)

- **2:30 PM | Sanctuary**  
Worship including the Lord's Supper
- **5:00 PM | Sanctuary**  
Family Worship Service
- **7:30 PM | Sanctuary**  
Candlelight Worship Service
- **10:00 PM | Sanctuary**  
Candlelight Worship Service

## Dec. 31 - NEW YEAR'S EVE

**11:00 AM | Westminster Hall**

One combined worship service. No morning Sunday School classes, childcare available (babies - kinder.)



Love SATX  
GOD'S MISSION. OUR CITY.

# CHRISTMAS PROJECT



## CHRISTMAS STORE

Donate new, unwrapped gifts or other items to serve our neighbors through the CAM Christmas Store. There are also dates throughout December to volunteer in the store. Amazon & Target Wishlists available. [christianassistanceministry.org](http://christianassistanceministry.org)



THE GOODHOOD

## AFFORDABLE CHRISTMAS

The GoodHood's Affordable Christmas event gives families on the Eastside of San Antonio the opportunity to provide Christmas gifts for their children in a way that preserves dignity and promotes empowerment. Amazon Wishlist available. [thegoodhood.org](http://thegoodhood.org)



## WINTER SUPPORT

As our ministry partners in the KRL serve our neighbors each day, they help to provide access to needed items like clothing, hygiene products, and food. You can help by donating these items to help their ongoing work.

Current needs include:

- Comfortable shoes, men and women
- Coats
- Sweatshirts & hoodies, men and women
- Denim pants (especially in sizes 30-34)

If you'd like to donate items for the KRL Resource Room, you can deliver them directly to the church, or you can visit the Amazon wishlist to have items shipped to FPC.



Each summer, SA East Young Life takes students to camps, where the kids can get away from their everyday life, have fun, and hear the message of God's love in terms they can understand.

Visit the tree in FPC Mauzé Lobby through December to adopt a SA East Young Life student. Your "adoption" includes a donation towards that student's summer camp cost and a commitment to pray for them.

For more information, please contact Baylie Collins at [saeastyl@gmail.com](mailto:saeastyl@gmail.com).

LOVE SATX THIS CHRISTMAS  
Visit [fpcsanantonio.org/christmas-giving](http://fpcsanantonio.org/christmas-giving)







# New Covenant Partners!

Joined in November 2023



**Aimee & Dave Everett**



**Ameyo Fiagan &  
Komi Gossa**



**Anthony Hernandez**



**Chris & Sarah Hodge**



**Aaron Gorenberg**



**Daniel Gorenberg**



**Robin & Randle Moore**

New members to our Friday Singers group are always welcomed. For those who love to sing and have a desire to join this music ministry call sooner, not later, to church (210-226-0215) music department or Charlotte Hains, 210-710-7173.





## WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

# Dec. 2023 Circle Meetings



(Circles meet September through May, except for Circles 18 & 20, who provide service all year)

Circle 1/12 Suzanne Thomas, Chair (210-846-3240)  
Grace Labatt, Moderator  
December 18, 2023, Third Monday, 11:30 am,  
Geneva Room (lunch optional)

Circle 5 Kay Weber, Co-Chair (210-288-5290)  
Mary Fruge-Medford, Co-Chair (210-823-7054)  
SHAWL MINISTRY  
December 20, 2023, Third Wednesday, 1:00 pm, Room 228



Circle 6 Jean Parsons, Chair (210-240-7483)  
Members of Circle, Moderators  
December 12, 2023, Second Tuesday, 1:30 pm, Geneva Room

Circle 7 Mary Ellen Mauze, Chair & Moderator (210-844-5549)  
December 12, 2023, Second Tuesday, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm, 203 Primrose,  
Drop off Gift of Christmas, Wrap/Label



Circle 8 Susan DeKoch, Coordinator (210-508-7127)  
Members of Circle, Moderators,  
Circle for mothers of young children  
December 10, 5:00-7:00 pm,  
Home of Kelsey Smith, 311 E. Mandalay Dr. 78212, Christmas Party

Circle 9 Grace Clouse, Co-Chair (734-718-7057)  
Janice Wilson, Co-Chair (210-260-4157)  
Ann Smith, Moderator  
December 12, 2023, Second Tuesday, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, Breakfast Room



Circle 11 Jean Swanson, Chair (210-826-0766)  
December 18, 2023, Third Monday, 12:30 pm,  
Home of Jean Swanson, 122 Medford

Circle 13 Grace Clouse, Chair (734-718-7057)  
LITERATURE CIRCLE  
December 12, 2023, Second Tuesday, 1:00 pm, McCullough Room  
Book Review: *Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of the American Dynasty* by Anderson Cooper -  
Reviewed by Tripp Stuart



Circle 14 Karen Carawan, Chair (210-213-4589)  
Suzie Simpson, Moderator  
Studying *Ten Women of the Bible, One by One They Changed the World*  
December 11, 2023, Second Monday, 12:00 pm, St. Andrews Room (with meal)

Circle 18 Char-An Witten, Chair (210-341-1856)  
Pat Brodeen, Email Contact for members ([pat@brodeen.com](mailto:pat@brodeen.com), 210-383-3083)  
CIRCLE OF CONCERN - Members set up, serve, and clean up for memorial receptions.  
(Small home baked cookies are always appreciated for receptions)

Circle 20 Muffin Camp, Co-Chair (210-789-1808) Mary Ann Smith, Co-Chair (817-933-9124)  
CIRCLE OF SERVICE - volunteers to make/take meals or snacks when needed.



# President's Letter Dec. 2023

*"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

## Merry Christmas!

The Women of the Church are selling their 2023 ornament throughout December to celebrate the Christmas season. This beautiful rendition of the front of First Presbyterian Church was illustrated by Stuart Seal and designed by Anne Folkes. Thank you to both for giving your time and talents to create this Christmas remembrance of our beloved church.



We were honored and appreciative to have Deborah and David Rogers as speakers at the annual WOC Fall Legacy Luncheon. They shared their family history, the beginnings of the H. E. Butt Foundation, as well as the mission of Laity Lodge. We were reminded their work is grounded in the



Gospel and has been led by their strong faith throughout the years. It was inspiring to learn from Deborah and David on the programs and initiatives underway and to hear of the many people who have been led to Christ and whose lives have been transformed through the work of the H. E. Butt Foundation.

Be sure to mark your calendars for Monday, March 4, 2024 as the date of the WOC Spring Luncheon. We will be hearing from a panel with an update about youth programs throughout the San Antonio area and the many ways churches and Christian organizations are working to connect with middle and high school students. More information will follow.

During this Advent season, the Women of the Church look forward to several opportunities for service. We invite everyone to participate with us!

On Thursdays, December 7 and 14 at 3:00 PM, WOC Circles will again be hosting two Christmas parties at Morningside Manor Senior Living. The residents will enjoy holiday music performed by the Friday Singers and the children from our FPC Children's Center. Delicious cookies provided by Circle members will be served and each resident will be given a colorful knitted cross, made by Mary Fruge-Medford and Circle 5. Many thanks to Mary and Kathy Serrano, the Party Chairs, for planning these festive events and to Rev. Scott Simpson and Rev. Joe Moore for the reading of the Christmas story at each gathering.

The "Gift of Christmas" and the "Angel Tree" sponsor programs will continue for a few more weeks. WOC Circles, Sunday School classes, Bible study groups and friends are adopting families in need of assistance through the House of Neighborly Service and the South Texas Alliance for Orphans and children through the Presbyterian Children's Home. If you are interested in adopting a family, please contact Kim Smith or Lellen Lane or a child, call Suzanne West, our PCHAS Ambassador. Thank you to everyone for caring for these neighbors and families and making it a very Merry Christmas for those of all ages.

On the afternoon of December 24, WOC will host the traditional Christmas Eve Reception for our ministers, choir and staff. It will be fun to join together to provide a buffet dinner during the busy schedule of Christmas Eve services. Thank you to all the volunteers who help host this event and bring the food. Please contact me if you would like to assist. We are very grateful for our dedicated church staff and choir for all they do during the Christmas season and throughout the year!

As you can see, there are many ways to be involved and meet other women who love and serve our Lord. Please be in contact if you would like to learn more. May God's blessings be with you and your families during this Merry Christmas season!

Joy To The World!

*Shelley Bass*

President, Women of the Church

[Bass.Shelley6@gmail.com](mailto:Bass.Shelley6@gmail.com)



# KEYS

KEEPING EVERYONE YOUNG IN SPIRIT

[fpcsanantonio.org/keys](http://fpcsanantonio.org/keys)



One of my favorite Christmas memories is from the Charlie Brown Christmas Special when Linus takes the stage and quotes these verses:

*<sup>8</sup> And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*<sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, <sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

November Birthdays were celebrated in style with a Thanksgiving lunch prepared by our Kitchen Staff, led by Chef Maurilio Garza. We could not have found a better meal in any restaurant in town.

We had a great team of wrappers for the Elf Louise Christmas Project this year, and we enjoyed our favorite thing to do—go out to eat together!

Anne Krause, Executive Director of Hemisfair, will be with us on December 1. Then, on December 8, we will have our Christmas Party. There will be a prize for the most festive Christmas outfit! Make your reservations for these events by calling the church office or on the sign-up sheets. We also have tickets for the December 10 showing of “Meet me in St Louis” at the Wonderland Theater. Tickets are \$26, showtime is at 3:00 PM, and a shuttle from FPC will leave at 2:00 PM. Our December activities will be taking a break at the end of the month for the Christmas Holiday. Enjoy time with your family and friends!

This year, KEYS is participating in Christmas Giving to House of Neighborly Services and the Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services. Donations collected in the red buckets on December 1 or given directly to Pastor Joe Moore will go to both groups to use as needed.





## December:

### 1 - Anne Krause

- Co-Founder, President & Executive Director of the Hemisfair Conservancy
- San Antonio Business Journal's 2023 *Woman of the Year*

### 8 - Christmas Party

**10 - "Meet Me in St. Louis" at the Wonder Theater** (previously the Woodlawn Theater) Tickets are \$26 each. Shuttle from FPC at 2:00 PM, show at 3:00 PM.

**No KEYS meetings on Fridays, December 15, 22, or 29.**



**KEYS events on site at FPC** begin at 11:00 AM and lunch is served at noon. Cost for lunch is \$13. To RSVP for KEYS meetings and/or lunches contact the church front desk at (210) 226-0215 or email [keys@fpcsat.org](mailto:keys@fpcsat.org).

### Friday Fitness

Friday Fitness continues via Zoom. Join Jacqueline Crow at 9:30 AM. Jacqui has been a champion for us and everyone loves the time with her. If you want to be included on the email notifications, send your email address to [joem@fpcsat.org](mailto:joem@fpcsat.org). You will be sent a link to join the Zoom Meeting.

### Mahjong & Bridge

Mahjong & Bridge meet on the 2nd and 4th Fridays at 1:00 PM in the Geneva Room. If you want to join in on the games call Suzanne West at 210-525-1499 or email Nancy Black at [whythere@icloud.com](mailto:whythere@icloud.com) for more information. You don't have to be a seasoned player and if you have a game you would like to play, let us know and we will make room for you!



*Rev. Dr. Joe Moore*

Assistant Pastor for Older Adults  
and Congregational Care





# FIRST CUP READINGS

## DECEMBER, 2023

Blessings and love in Christ,

*Sandy Sturch*

Dear Family in Christ,

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

*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 1 Thessalonians 4; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58
- 2 1 Thessalonians 5; Ephesians 6:10-20;  
1 Corinthians 1:8

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

- 3 Isaiah 5:18-19; 2 Peter 3; Ezekiel 12:21-28;  
Isaiah 14:24; 45:18-25
- 4 2 Thessalonians 1-2
- 5 Isaiah 9:6; 11; Micah 5:2-5; Romans 15:1-13
- 6 Psalm 62; 4
- 7 Luke 12:13-34; Philippians 4:6-7
- 8 Psalm 46; 9:7-10; 100:3; 4:8; John 14:26-27
- 9 Psalm 143; 27:11; John 14:23-27;  
Romans 5:1-5; 8:6; 12:17-21; 14:19

*Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n, to earth come down! Fix in us Thy humble dwelling; all Thy faithful mercies crown. Jesus, Thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love Thou art. Visit us with Thy salvation; enter ev'ry trembling heart. Come, Almighty, to Deliver; let us all Thy life receive. Suddenly return, and never, never-more Thy temples leave. Thee we would be always blessing, serve Thee as Thy hosts above, Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, glory in Thy perfect love. (Worship in Song, No. 16)*

- 10 Proverbs 29:17; Hebrews 12:1-14; James 3:17-18;  
Ephesians 4:3; 6:14-15
- 11 Matthew 10; Ephesians 2:14-22; Romans 5:1-11
- 12 Psalm 25; Jeremiah 3:25; Ephesians 2:1-10;  
Psalm 32
- 13 Psalm 86; Exodus 34:6; Joel 2:13; John 15:8-17
- 14 John 13:1-17; 1 John 1; 2
- 15 1 John 3; John 13:34-35
- 16 John 3:16-18; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4; 2:3-4, 9-11

*How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n. 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 on 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. Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel. (Worship in Song, No. 174)*

- 17 1 John 5; Psalm 36; 106:1
- 18 1 Corinthians 13; Psalm 118:1; 1 Corinthians 10:24;  
Romans 15:1-2
- 19 Psalm 96; Hebrews 1:1-12
- 20 Isaiah 52; Psalm 98; Psalm 126
- 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

*As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold; As with joy they hailed its light, Leading onward, beaming bright; so, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led to thee. As with joyous steps they sped to that lowly manger bed, There to bend the knee before Him whom heaven and earth adore, so may we with willing feet ever seek Thy mercy seat. As they offered gifts most rare at that manger rude and bare, So may we with holy joy, Pure, and free from sin's alloy, all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King. (Worship in Song, No. 173)*

- 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
- 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 5:1-10



*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).*

[www.fpcsanantonio.org](http://www.fpcsanantonio.org)



# Year-End Giving & Holiday Office Hours

As the year ends, many are starting to think about year-end charitable giving. We are here to ensure your gift is received in plenty of time to include in the current tax year. If you are planning to send a gift from a retirement account, stock, or mutual fund, please remember that these gifts take extra time and effort to process. Outside of the holiday season, stock gifts can take a few days to complete and mutual funds can take up to a month to process. These types of gifts given in the last week of the month could miss the end-of-year deadline for contribution credit because the holidays may slow broker processing times. We ask that you notify the finance office if you are planning on giving one of these types of gifts so that we can make sure your gift is applied to the appropriate account and processed in a timely manner.

Please check with your broker as many take leave for the holidays and will not be available. You may also need extra information from the finance office to complete these transactions—and we are here to help! Please see the information below:

**For Stock and Mutual Fund Gifts** - Broker: Morgan Stanley -  
DTC#: 0015 - Account #045-105157

**Primary Broker Contact:**  
**Sandra Deskin, 210-271-6186 (not available Dec. 25 - 29, 2023)**

**Secondary Broker Contacts:**  
**Alan Pearson: 210-271-6100 (not available Christmas Day)**  
**Stephen Scott: 210-271-6161 (not available Christmas Day)**

**For Retirement Distributions and QCDs - TAX ID: 74-1175837**  
Make checks payable and mail directly to First Presbyterian Church at 404 N. Alamo St., San Antonio, Texas 78205 to ensure the gift is received for the appropriate tax year.

Keep in mind that the church offices will be closed from December 25, 2023 - January 1, 2024, but there will be someone available by phone in the finance office from December 27 - 29, 2023. Due to office closures during the holidays, we request that you begin processing these gifts as soon as possible.

As always, we thank you and thank God for your generosity as together we follow God's call for First Presbyterian and its ministries.

You can reach our team at the following:  
Christi Burrell: 210-271-2755 or [christib@fpcsat.org](mailto:christib@fpcsat.org)  
Marie Nipp: 210-271-2756 or [marien@fpcsat.org](mailto:marien@fpcsat.org)



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