

"to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."

*Luke 2:11 (NRSV)* 

December 2021

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#### Newsletter Team

Talita Gottmann and Tina Paulk, Editors

The News is a publication of First Presbyterian Church of Arlington 1200 South Collins Arlington, TX 76010

Contact us at thenews@firstprrestexas.org

# Happy (Liturgical) New Year

Advent is here and we have begun a new liturgical year in the Christian church. It's a great time to do some reflecting as well as looking ahead. In our immediate rearview mirror is all the work in completing our Enter In generosity campaign. I want to thank Matt Annen who served as our executive director. I really appreciated his enthusiasm to get up and do some public speaking week after week. Since public speaking ranks higher than death on people's fear list, I know what that entails. I also appreciated his openness in sharing the inspiring story of his mother-in-law. We couldn't have completed the campaign without him. The other person who deserves great thanks (and will figuratively punch me for pointing the spotlight on her) is Lucia Bitnar. She took the concept of a prayer event and created a multi-station walk throughout our church. Numerous people texted, emailed, and get this, actually spoke to me telling me how meaningful that prayer walk was. Her creativity and theology inspired those of us who took advantage of that opportunity. And thank all of you who have responded with your 2022 commitments. The initial response was fantastic and we look forward to working towards our goal of 100% of all households who call FPCA their church home.

We also elect new officers in December which means saying thank you to officers rotating off after fulfilling their terms at the end of the year. I appreciate all of you saying yes and accepting the call God has placed on your life and service to this congregation. Our Congregational Nominating Team worked hard to discern and extend those invitations. And we firmly believe that through that process, this is who God is calling at this particular time.

Looking ahead means incorporating those new leaders into our teams. It also means another team, our Transform Team, will be conducting final interviews to select a general contractor for step 1 of our renovation. Their work remains in the background but we are getting closer and closer to the time everyone will clearly see – things are happening!

Please read through this newsletter for all the opportunities to worship and serve throughout the month of December. Have a very blessed Advent and a most Merry Christmas!

Cheerfully,

Pastor Chris Campbell

# **Finance Update**

For the month of October 2021:

#### **Budget (Operating and Funds Released)**

Income: \$ 52,645 Expense: (\$72,473)

Income - Expense for month: (\$19,828)
Income - Expense for 2021 Year to Date: (\$41,923)



#### **Comments:**

We are always so grateful for your generous donations. Because of your support we were able to:

- participated with law enforcement groups and other faith tradition groups, in the National Faith & Blue Weekend to help build bridges and reconciliation in our community.
- provided ways to give financial gifts of assistance to local, regional, and international needs.
- shared a great time reaching out to our community with our annual Trunk or Treat.
- enjoyed Kid's Night Out which is a great time for kids to have fun playing, eating pizza, connecting with one another and having a short Bible lesson.
- kicked off a successful annual Thanksgiving Basket donations outreach.
- As of October, our Capital Campaign fund balance is \$1,184,637.

We are doing well and, because of you, we are able to carry out the ministries that are calling to our FPCA family. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns, at jeanne@firstprestexas.org.

### The Mitten Tree 2021

Please help families during this Christmas season and during the cold winter months by bringing new warm gloves, hats, and scarves and hang them on the Mitten Tree! These will be given to Arlington Charities for children and adults in time for Christmas. The Mitten Tree is located in the red hall. Please stop by and make someone's Christmas happy...and WARM!

# The Dove Tree 2021

The Dove tree is up in the Narthex. Each dove has a name of one of our homebound members. Please take a dove and make a visit to one of our senior members. A small gift, a visit, poinsettia, etc. will brighten their Christmas season and you will be blessed in return.

# **Children's Ministry**

#### **Preschool**



#### MONTHLY OVERVIEW

Merry Christmas! It's time to celebrate the birth of our Savior! We are using the alphabet this month as a fun way to introduce the true story about how God gave us Jesus. One day—sooner than we think—our now preschoolers are going to grow up and start asking some hard questions. How do I know God really loves me? Does God still love me?

We want the answer to be right there and ready for them—I know God loves me because God gave us Jesus. Whenever doubt comes into our heart, whenever our mind begins to ask questions and seek proof, we need only remember back to that first Christmas when God sent His Son to us.

Merry Christmas! May you be filled with joy this Christmas season as you remember that God loves the world so much, He gave us His Son, Jesus.

ONE	BIBLE STORY The Angel and Mary Luke 1:26-33, 38, 46-49	STORY FOCUS God told us He would give us Jesus.
TWO	BIBLE STORY Jesus Born Stable Luke 2:1-7	STORY FOCUS Jesus is born.
THREE	BIBLE STORY The Shepherds Luke 2:8-21	<b>STORY FOCUS</b> The angels tell about Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE	KEY QUESTION	BOTTOM LINE		
"GOD HAS GIVEN A SON TO US." ISAIAH 9:6, NCV	HOW DO WE KNOW GOD LOVES US?	GOD GAVE US JESUS.		
GOD LOVES ME.				

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#### **Elementary and KFC**



#### MONTHLY OVERVIEW

#### GOD VIEW:

#### THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

For many of us, Christmas lights are the best and brightest part of Christmas celebrations. It doesn't matter if it's the high-rises in the big city or houses lining Main Street; when the lights come out, it's a wonderland! People celebrate big at Christmas because there's Someone big to celebrate: Jesus!

The best gift God ever gave was Jesus. Because of Jesus, it's possible for us to have a relationship with God that will last forever. As we remember the Christmas story, we take time to celebrate the greatest gift the world has ever known.

ONE	BIBLE STORY Elizabeth & Zechariah Luke 1:5-25, 57-66	BOTTOM LINE Celebrate because God can do anything.
TWO	BIBLE STORY Gabriel Appears to Mary Luke 1:26-56	BOTTOM LINE Celebrate because God has a plan.
THREE	BIBLE STORY Jesus Is Born/Shepherds Visit Luke 2:1-20	BOTTOM LINE Celebrate because God sent a Savior.
FOUR	BIBLE STORY Wise Men Matthew 2:1-12	BOTTOM LINE Never stop celebrating Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE	"GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON. ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT DIE BUT WILL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE."  JOHN 3:16, NIRV	
CHRISTMAS	Celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift	

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#### Save the date

December 3: Kids Night Out from 6:00-8:00 for children 6<sup>th</sup> grade and younger.

# Youth Ministry

#### 20 Memorable Family Christmas Traditions

by Stuart Hall

Traditions are important for families because they provide opportunities to keep your family legacy going. From the simple to the silly to the sentimental, traditions can create meaningful memories. Don't hesitate to try out some new traditions this Christmas season and see what works and what doesn't for your own family. You just may create a new tradition that will keep going for generations! If you are looking for some ideas in the search for new Christmas traditions, consider the following:

- **1. Try an annual extended-family get-together.** Sometime around Christmas gather the extended family together at someone's home or restaurant and hang out with one another.
- **2. Watch Christmas movies.** Throughout the Christmas season, gather the kids together and enjoy your favorite Christmas movies. Two of my own personal favorites: It's a Wonderful Life and A Christmas Carol.
- **3.** Attend a Christmas Eve service. If your church doesn't have a Christmas Eve service, you can probably find one going on somewhere in your community. This is a great way to focus your family's perspective on the true meaning of Christmas!
- **4. Start traditions with Christmas Eve/Christmas Day meals.** For example, at the Burns' home, it's always Chinese food on Christmas Eve.
- **5. Letters to Jesus.** Before opening your Christmas presents, write thank-you letters to Jesus. Collect them and make them available every Christmas. Keep adding new letters annually. Here's one rule to make this tradition work well: family members can only read the thank-you letters they have written.
- **6.** Live out an annual family version of The Twelve Days of Christmas. First identify a friend, relative, or neighbor to receive all the "gifts." Then create a unique gift for each day of the song (i.e., five golden rings could be five glazed donuts) and place the gifts on the recipient's front porch.
- **7. Bake and decorate homemade Christmas cookies.** Allow everyone in the family to participate if they want. Everyone should be able to request their favorite kind of cookie.
- **8. Sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus on Christmas Day.** After all, it is Jesus' birthday that we celebrate.
- **9. Read the Christmas story from Luke 2.** Whether you open your gifts on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning, try having someone from your family read the Christmas story out loud before opening gifts.
- 10. Go to the movies on Christmas Day. Gather the troops and head off to the local movie theater. You'll probably get good seats!
- 11. Drive around looking at Christmas lights. Sometime during the Christmas season, load the family up in the car and drive around looking at Christmas lights. This is an activity you might want to combine with attending a Christmas Eve service.

- **12. Go Christmas caroling.** Take a walk around your immediate neighborhood and stop at homes and sing Christmas carols.
- **13. Visit a nursing home.** There are usually a lot of lonely people living in nursing homes especially during the Christmas season. Prepare some Christmas cookies and take your family to visit a nursing home—and spread the love of Jesus to sick and elderly people.
- **14. Help at a food bank or soup kitchen.** Try spending Christmas day helping the needy at a local food bank or soup kitchen. You never know, your kids may never want to spend Christmas day at home again!
- **15. Celebrate your family's ethnic heritage(s).** Sometime during the Christmas season, prepare a family meal(s) that celebrates your family's ethnic heritage. This is a great way to connect with your family roots especially if you don't regularly focus on this throughout the year.
- **16. Secret Santa.** As a family, select one person you know who is lonely, needy, or just needs some extra encouragement. Purchase or create a special gift for this person. Then on Christmas Eve/Christmas morning, get the family up out of bed, bundle up, grab some cookies and hot cocoa, pile into the family car, and drive the gift over to the person's home. Sneak the gift onto the front porch and include an attached card that reads, "From your Secret Santa."
- **17. Holiday memory journal or scrapbook.** Purchase or make a holiday journal or scrapbook. Have everyone in the family contribute by recording memories of the holiday season. Keep adding to the journal/scrapbook annually. This provides a wonderful way to look back over Christmases gone by.
- **18. Ice skating on Christmas Eve day.** Many people get off from work early on Christmas Eve. Gather the family and head out to an ice rink or local (frozen!) pond for some time on the ice. It's a great way to spend some family time and it keeps the kids active and helps them not to over-obsess on the presents under the tree back home.
- **19. Attend a local community Christmas event.** This tradition can really take hold if the community holds the same event annually.
- **20.** Try a New Year's Eve event. Whether it is a neighborhood get-together, a party with friends and family, or a special church event, ringing in the New Year together as a family can create great memories.

Blessings in Christ,

Adrian

# Financial Peace University Returns Sunday School!

Join the millions who never have to worry about money again! Financial Peace University (FPU) is the proven plan that helps you pay off debt fast and save more money for your future. FPU is the nine-lesson class that teaches you the step-by-step plan to win with money.

FPU helped us (i.e., Katina and James Gifford) renew our minds and repent as a married couple in our spiritual journey. It taught us how to steward God's resources, how to put Him first in our lives, and how to leave a legacy to our children. This Bible-inspired way of handling money is a life-changing and saving course that every person will benefit from, regardless of how much money you have saved, debt you still have, or how old you are. We all can learn something new, so come join us!

When: Sundays, Jan. 23, 2022 - Mar. 27, 2022 from 9:45-10 45am

Where: FPCA chapel

#### Cost:

• 14-day free trial available

• \$130: 1-year Ramsey+ membership\* (four scholarships available and need to be used: contact leaders, first come first serve)

• \$100: 6- month Ramsey+ membership\*

• \$60: 3-month Ramsey+ membership\*

\*all memberships include workbook

Questions: talk to James or Katina Gifford, email crystalpoolfw@gmail.com, or call/text 817-725-5653

Sign Up: at fpu.com/1143036 or ask a Gifford to help or come to first gathering (Jan. 23rd) to sign up

# Gifts of Hope are available!

FPCA will once again be offering Gifts of Hope for the 2021 Advent Season. Gifts of Hope is an alternative gift market that offers a creative and caring way to honor friends, family members, colleagues, etc. through donations to a wide range of outreach organizations. "Shoppers" choose an organization, donate the amount specified, and then receive a card to give as a gift to friends or family. This program not only supports outreach organizations, but also seeks to offer a less materialistic option for gift giving.

Gifts of Hope will be available for sale on Sundays before and after the 11AM worship service starting between Sunday, December 5th and ending Sunday, December 19th. They are also available for sale in the church office during the week. If you have any questions or are available to help with the program (by selling Gifts of Hope before/after worship services, etc.), please email Suzie McCoy at smccoybelize@gmail.com, Laura Farnell at laura.farnell@gmail.com, or contact the church office.

## **An Advent Festival**



# FPCA's Two Special Offerings in December

Our church supports two special offerings during the month of December. One is the Christmas Joy Offering which goes directly to Presbytery. The other goes to Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS). Special offering envelopes can be found outside the sanctuary or chapel or you can designate on a blank envelope or your check which offering you are supporting.

A Presbyterian tradition for seventy years, the Christmas Joy Offering is designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to provide congregations a direct way of supporting specific causes that help those in need. The receipts from the Joy Offering are distributed equally to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs and to the National Ministries of the General Assembly Council to support Presbyterian racial ethnic education. To read a brief account of how one family benefited from the Christmas Joy Offering, visit: https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/story/arms-church-around-us/.



PCHAS Our church continually supports PCHAS but especially at Christmas. During FPCA's Christmas Eve services, the undesignated offerings will benefit PCHAS. You could also speak to Marge and Bob Dawson, PCHAS Ambassadors and volunteers, about this very worthy organization which supports many children and families in a variety of ways throughout Texas.

To find out more about PCHAS, visit: https://www.pchas.org/who-we-are/pchas-way.

Submitted by Sheri Quick and Bob Dawson Mission and Evangelism Team

# A Praise and Prayer from the Shidelers

Dear Kim and FPCA Family,

W-a-a-y back in 1992, as we were praying, thinking, mulling the decision to leave life as we knew it to step into the world of missions, God spoke to us in a variety of ways as He calmed fears, clarified next steps, and instilled peace. These times of experiencing His presence in worship inevitably brought me (Marla) to tears. I call them "Holy Spirit tears" and they are precious to me. I had such an experience last Sunday in church. We were visiting family in Montana and, while in church, we sang the hymn, "Here I am Lord". As this was one of the hymns that spoke to us about 30 years ago, my tears began to flow.

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard My people cry. All who dwell in dark and sin, My hand will save. ... Who will bear My light to them? Whom shall I send? Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord? I have heard You calling in the night. I will go Lord if You lead me. I will hold Your people in my heart.

"Yes, Lord", I thought. "You called, we obeyed. And we're still obeying your call."

Immediately after the hymn, it was time for the children's message. As the children spilled into the front of the church, the congregation sang, "Jesus loves me, this I know; for the Bible tells me so."

The tears ran even faster as I thought of the children – and their families - of over 1800 language groups who are still waiting to hear of Jesus' love for them in the language they understand best.

Please join us in praising God for these **Scripture dedications** that took place in September! Pray that the Scriptures will be used and result in transformed lives.

- Barrai\* New Testament, South Asia, Sept. 5, 2021. Population: 195,100. (\*Name changed)
- Toba New Testament, Paraguay, Sept. 25-26, 2021. Population: 900.

**Praise God** with us that the people of these two language groups will now be able to read that Jesus loves them too. This is what Bible translation is all about!

Thank you for your prayer and financial partnership that have made it possible for us to serve with Wycliffe for over 27 years. We are privileged to continue serving the task of Bible translation from our home in Washington state!

If you'd like to **pray for us**, here's what's going on. Warning, it's a long list this month...

#### **PRAISES**

- Praise God with us that, for the past 12 months, we have averaged 100% of the budget Wycliffe has set for our ministry. We are thankful for all who share in our ministry!
- Praise God with us we have been able to visit Kevin, Erin, and the girls in Canada twice in recent months!
- Marla's dad recently celebrated his 94th birthday and Brett's mom will mark her 94th birthday next month. How we praise God for our wonderful parents who laid such a strong foundation for their children. May we do as well for our children!

#### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

- Brett has had several opportunities for face-to-face meetings with his new SIL Global HR
  team which has led to an increased workload for him. Please pray for TWO upcoming
  meetings in November:
  - Nov 2-4 he will participate in a virtual meeting of HR departments around the world.
    This is an opportunity to synchronize so as to improve HR and member care
    services.
  - o Nov 15-17 Brett will be flying to meet with another member of the SIL Global HR team. Together they will provide **member care** services to a family who is hurting.
- Marla continues to serve members who are transitioning to and from international assignments, are transitioning to serve in US-based assignments, or who are experiencing challenging events.
  - Praise God travel has opened up sufficiently for two families to return to their international assignments and for another preparing to return to the US for Home Assignment (AKA "furlough").
  - Pray as she provides care to two members who are in challenging health situations.
     One is hoping to return overseas in early 2021, another may need to transition to a US-based assignment.
  - o Pray for wisdom, compassion, and grace as she **serves** others.
- Additional prayer items...
  - You may know we tried to pull together a PD trip to Colorado and Texas for October. It fell through, as we could not find a house sitter. Please pray we can identify a house sitter for a future trip next year. (We really want to see all of you!)
  - O Brett will have his second carpal tunnel **surgery** on 1 Nov. Please pray it is as trouble-free as the first one!

Grateful for you!

Brett and Marla

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV)

# **Seen around the Church**









## This Month

Some activities are postponed until further notice. The Activities marked with \* are happening.



#### Men's Bible Study \*

The Men's Bible Study group meets every Wednesday morning at 8:00 a.m. in the parlor. Men of all ages meet and enjoy great fellowship and a prayer session. All men are invited to join this study.

#### Women's Bible Study\*

The Monday Night Women's Bible study will resume meeting the third Monday of each month at 6 p.m. beginning September 20.

#### Tuesday Morning Bible Study\*

Men and women of all ages are invited to meet in the Parlor every Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m.



## Music Ministries

#### Chancel Choir\*

This is the primary worship leadership ensemble for the 11:00 service. The choir also sings for special services around Christmas and Holy Week. It is more than just a great choir; it is a caring fellowship. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m in the Fellowship Hall. Nursery care is provided during rehearsals.

#### Ring of Praise Handbell Ensemble \*

This intergenerational handbell group rehearses Wednesday evenings from 6:15 until 7:15 p.m. If you are interested in ringing, please contact Russell Farnell (fpcamusic@yahoo.com or 817-274-8286).

#### Youth Choir \*

During the school year, this group of youth in grades 6 to 12 meets on Sunday, 12:45 to 1:45 p.m., in the choir room.

#### Children's Music Ministries \*

The children's choirs meet from 12:45 to 1:45 p.m. on Sundays during the school year. Children ages 4 (when school starts) through grade 5 participate in activities including music/singing and bells/chimes, instruments, and listening activities. There are two sections, divided by age, and both participate in the 11:00 worship service twice per year, usually in December and April.



#### Church Leadership

#### Deacon Meeting\*

Thursday, January 6, at 6:30 p.m., the Diaconate meets in the parlor to oversee the Congregational Care, Hospitality, and Fellowship ministries.

#### Team Meeting Night\*

Thursday, December 2, at 7:00 p.m., all teams for ministry planning and coordination.

#### Session Meeting\*

Tuesday, December 21, at 7:00 p.m., the Session meets in person in the Parlor to oversee the ministry of the church. Indoor worship, Budget, Generis, and other matters. The work of the Diaconate, church administration, and all Discipleship, Worship, Facility Management, and Mission and Evangelism ministries will be discussed.



#### Library Team

The library team works the first Wednesday of each month, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Anyone interested is welcome. No particular skill is required, the work is easy, and we always have a good time as we process books to be added to our inventory. If you would like to be involved in library work but cannot come at that evening time, please contact Sandy Thomlinson (at 817-522-2080) and special daytime work sessions can be arranged.



#### Happy Quilters \*

This group meets Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. to quilt, sew, knit, crochet, embroider, and just enjoy being together. Bring your project and join in!

#### Saints Alive!

Church seniors will meet for a potluck lunch on Thursday,, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a casserole, salad, or dessert and enjoy a fun and interesting afternoon.

Contact Bev Koch (817-261-3202) for details.



First Presbyterian Church 1200 S. Collins Street Arlington, TX 76010

#### Deadline for the January issue of The News is December 15!

# **Prayer Ministry**

Prayers for those with health and other concerns: Apana Agha, Jack Bos, James (Andrew) Bridges, the Boice Family, Carol Browning, Vannah Caylor, John Clements, Frank Coburn, Edna Collins, Lloyd Counts, the Ellis Family, the Farnell Family, Don Farrell, Yvette Fielder, the Formusoh Family, the Gifford Family, Joe and Lila Glenn, the Gottmann Family, Andrew Hydock, Bob Johnson, Tim Karnes (Pat May's son), Gary Lindley, Pat May, the McDermott Family, Barbara Mooers, Jim L. Quick, Jillian Reynolds, Joan Reynolds, Beth Rotert, Kathy Rotert, John and Donna Vickers, and Nancy Welborne.

Prayers for our family serving in the armed forces: Ben Boughton, Riley Curnutt, Austin Curran, Jeff Grimes, Nathan Haerer, Damien King, Mike Manci, Amie Murtha, Stephen O'Neil Sosa, Colin Peden, Ryan Powell, Ryan Regalado, Peyton Steeno, Christopher Young, and Robbie Wallace

**Prayers for our homebound members:** Esther Albright, Suzette Armstrong, Tom and Bobbie Fowler, Barbara Hughes, Jeanne Malone, Charlene Miller, Cary Moore, Carrie Pacot, Ann Pitstick, Betty Snowden, Dee Uhri, Richard Whitenight, and Mary Jane Wright

Pray for those who do not know Christ!

If you have any congregational care needs, please contact Pastor Chris Campbell at 817-274-8286.

