



"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."

Colossians 4:2

November
2023

The News

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Newsletter Team

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The News is a publication of
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Just Believe

In a parking lot, this vehicle caught my eye. Well, it wasn't the vehicle, but the backwards letters going across the top of the windshield. If this car were to pull up behind you, in your mirror you would read, "Just believe." Of all the messages and bumper stickers people choose to display on their cars these days, at least this one was pretty positive!

Just believe. Believe in what? During our study on the 12 disciples, I remember talking about zeal. Zeal itself is neutral until you attach it to something, someone, or some cause. At that point, zeal can become positive or negative. Rangers fans are full of incredibly positive zeal right now! Astros fans, well...



Believing, or belief, is similar. Until belief becomes connected, it too remains not just neutral, but uninspiring and has no impact. We are tempted to believe in many things and people. Politics is always the easy go to. Pick your politician. Pick your cause. Pick your party. Those are the obvious examples. Believe in your favorite sports team(s). People believe in fate, destiny, karma, horoscopes, numerology, and on and on and on and on.

There is a competition for our belief. Sometimes God and his church wins out, other times not so much. And from a faith perspective, it is an incredibly silly choice – no matter who or what it is. We (myself included!) know what nourishes, what provides, what sustains us. And yet how often do we search elsewhere for purpose and fulfillment? While I would love to say, "Just believe!" and think everything will be fine, until we connect that belief with living water and heavenly food, we will always end up thirsty and hungry for more. I believe in God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The Apostles' Creed keeps the appropriate focus of our

belief in check. Anything else is idolatry. Yes, I believed in our Rangers but even Bruce Bochy does not come close to being the skipper of my faith. This incredible sugary endorphin rush will one day subside (just not too soon!), and this temporary joy will leave me wanting more. My faith in God, however, is eternal. Just believe. Just be careful who and what you believe in ultimately. Go Rangers!

Pastor Chris

Finance Update

For the month of September 2023:

Budget (Operating and Funds Released)

Income: \$ 77,159

Expense: (\$99,407)

Income - Expense for month: **(\$22,248)**

Income - Expense for 2023 Year to Date: **(\$76,383)**



Comments:

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

- continue our sermon series on The 12, studying the 12 disciples plus Paul.
- resume our Fall Music Ministries with Ring of Praise handbells, and Youth and Children Music Ministries.
- launch a new ministry/small group called Embrace Grace which provides emotional, practical, and spiritual support for single, young pregnant women who find themselves in an unexpected pregnancy.
- Enjoy a “Late Summer Festival” luncheon, hosted by our Fellowship Team.
- Support the PCHAS Back to School Drive with new backpacks filled with school supplies.
- As of September, our Capital Campaign fund balance is \$1,523,707.

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.

Children`s Ministry

Preschool



MONTHLY OVERVIEW

Thanking God for Who He is, what He has done, and what He has given us is something people have been doing for a very, very, VERY long time. You could say that the people in the Bible make up this super long **PARADE OF THANKS** . . . and it's up to us to keep it going! We want our preschoolers to continue this Parade of Thanks by teaching them they can thank God for everything—literally everything! Their light-up shoes, their new toy, their snack, their favorite rock . . . EVERYTHING! So let's make sure the **Parade of Thanks** that God's people began so long ago continues with us and our preschoolers as we choose to thank God for everything!

WEEK ONE	BIBLE STORY Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz Ruth 1-2	STORY FOCUS I can thank God for family.
WEEK TWO	BIBLE STORY David and Jonathan 1 Samuel 18:1-4	STORY FOCUS I can thank God for friends.
WEEK THREE	BIBLE STORY Manna and Quail Exodus 16	STORY FOCUS I can thank God for food.
WEEK FOUR	BIBLE STORY David Praises God 2 Samuel 6:12-15, Psalm 149:1-5	STORY FOCUS I can thank God all the time.

MEMORY VERSE	KEY QUESTION	BOTTOM LINE
"ALWAYS GIVE THANKS TO GOD." EPHESIANS 5:20, NIRV	WHO CAN YOU THANK FOR EVERYTHING?	I CAN THANK GOD FOR EVERYTHING.
GOD LOVES ME.		

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Elementary and KFC



ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2023

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

GOD VIEW:

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

Gratitude sometimes feels like a lost art. Yet gratitude is an idea close to God's heart. Think about all of the Bible stories where people gave thanks to God. The Israelites celebrated God with feasts and festivals. The writers of the Psalms wrote songs of praise to thank God for being faithful. Throughout this month, we hope kids will learn to be grateful for everything God has done: for the world God made, for the promises God has kept, and for the new life God offers the world through Jesus. When we remember all of these things, we can always be thankful.

WEEK ONE

BIBLE STORY
Give Thanks No Matter
What Happens
1 Thessalonians 5:18

BOTTOM LINE
You always have something to be
grateful for.

WEEK TWO

BIBLE STORY
David Dances
2 Samuel 6:12b-22a

BOTTOM LINE
Celebrate what God has done.

WEEK THREE

BIBLE STORY
Jesus Heals 10 Men
Luke 17:11-19

BOTTOM LINE
Take time to say thank you.

WEEK FOUR

BIBLE STORY
The Lord's Supper/Passover
1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Exodus 12

BOTTOM LINE
Make a habit of being grateful.

MEMORY VERSE

**"GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, BECAUSE HE IS GOOD. HIS FAITHFUL LOVE
CONTINUES FOREVER." PSALM 136:1, NIRV**

GRATITUDE

LETTING OTHERS KNOW YOU SEE HOW THEY'VE HELPED YOU.

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Save the date.

November 10: Kids Night Out from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

November 17-18: Family Camp.

November 26: Luncheon for Families with Children or Youth.

Youth Ministry

5 Ways to Support Your Kids During Scary Times

By Dr. Chinwé Williams

Let's face it, we were really hoping 2021 would be phenomenal. And it still may be. But the images of the violence that took place in our nation's capital were deeply disturbing and once again, placed us parents in the undesirable position of having to engage in really tough conversations with our kids.

As parents, when chaos and confusion erupt, our immediate thoughts are typically:

How are my children translating these events? Should I raise the subject? If so, how do I go about it?

And: How can I respond without further confusing or traumatizing them?

Navigating difficult terrain is all part of the parenting journey. It will never be easy. But in a crisis, it is mission-critical to help kids make sense of what's happening and manage any anxiety they may be experiencing.

Here are five tips that might help.

Initiate the discussion.

When faced with speaking to kids about a tragic event, the tendency for most parents is to distract, avoid, or get that deer-caught-in-the-headlights look. Broaching difficult subjects can be challenging for parents who fear that talking about sad things might cause unnecessary harm, but studies indicate the opposite. Research suggests that in the wake of a traumatizing event, talking to your kids helps them to feel safe. Hearing about or witnessing frightening images on the news or online is very unsettling, and not addressing it may cause additional anxiety for kids. So, it's best to initiate the topic because, chances are, they have already overheard some conversations and may be confused. In teaching your kids about the world (as scary as it is), you become a trusted source for information and help them cultivate tools needed to become critical thinkers.

Respond in developmentally appropriate ways.

Navigating complicated topics such as violence and injustice can be tricky, particularly when speaking to younger kids. Knowledge of your kids' maturity level, temperament, and how they perceive the world, will serve as your guide. Younger kids may shrug off the news, but your tween may have lots of thoughts and questions. Answer honestly. And listen earnestly to what they say no matter how mundane or off-topic. At any age, keep in mind that kids who are highly sensitive will have a tough time absorbing distressing information and may feel a degree of burden. So, use your best judgment and take your cues from your child. Consider the drip method. Just a little bit at a time and discontinue if you notice an increase in distress.

In preparation for these conversations, here are some potential prompts:

What do you know/think/feel about what's happened recently?

What are your friends saying about this situation?

This must feel very scary to you. I am scared too. Do you want to talk about it?

What are some things we can do as a family to help you feel safer?

Many people, including our leaders, don't see the world in the same way. What are some of your solutions on how to move forward? (for teens)

That's a really good question. I don't know the answer. Maybe we can find out together.

As unpleasant as it might initially be, having difficult conversations with our kids offers a unique opportunity for important discussions about history, race, civics, empathy, and justice. As you share, remember to avoid negatively labeling groups, communities, or political parties—only label behaviors. With younger kids, be sure to emphasize any acts of heroism and how the event is being addressed, either through investigations or preventative measures.

Encourage the expression of fear.

When your kid learns about a tragic event, it's normal for him or her to feel anxious, overwhelmed, and fearful. Fear is an intense human emotion. At the heart of fear is a strong desire to avoid any perceived threat to safety. As parents, we have the awesome ability to offer safety. Utilizing a calm vocal tone and soft facial expressions helps to bring calm to our kids' nervous systems. Encouraging them to share their unpleasant feelings and having those feelings validated creates emotional safety. They may be initially reluctant to share, but let them know you are available when they are ready. And finally, encourage your kids to take their biggest worries and fears to God—their fiercest protector!

Depending on the nature of the event, you may also feel unsettled. Kids are sensitive to their parents' anxieties, which can intensify their own. If your anger or fear becomes overwhelming, postpone the conversation and connect with your own support system.

Limit media exposure.

Experts are clear. The best person to deliver difficult news to kids is a trusted adult. But in the age of the 24-hour news cycle and non-stop phone notifications, our kids often hear the stories before we do. This can be problematic as news delivery has increasingly become sensationalized. An overconsumption of media following a tragic event is linked with increased anxiety. Limit media and refrain from watching the news coverage or scrolling through social media before bed. Instead, encourage your kid or teen to listen to soft music, or read a funny novel. For younger kids who may experience upsetting thoughts or dreams, encourage them to “put in happy thoughts” such as the thought of someone who loves them or visualize having fun with a friend. I also recommend breathing exercises. You can practice by saying, “Let's breathe in slowly, then count to three, then exhale to a count of three.”

Maintain routines and meaningful activities.

Following a crisis, individuals who fare well become laser-focused on the things that matter. Deviating from what is familiar can generate increased anxiety. Maintaining family routines creates a feeling of safety. Engaging in meaningful family activities enhances feelings of stability and improves family bonding. Following a scary event, all humans, no matter the age, benefit from reassuring words, comfort food, and extra cuddles.

While parenting in the midst of chaos is never guaranteed to be 100 percent successful, what I learned most from 2020 is that the chances of success are greatly improved when we lean on the

support of others. My prayer is that God will continue to give us a greater capacity to find moments of joy and contentment even through the most challenging of times.

If your child's anxiety doesn't improve or seems to worsen after three months, seek immediate help from your pediatrician or a mental health professional.

Blessings in Christ,

Adrian

Monthly Food Bank

Join us Saturday, November 11, starting at 8:30 a.m. to distribute food, or bring your neighbors to receive food, at the Arlington Charities mobile food bank.

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church

2045 SE Green Oaks Blvd

Arlington, TX 76018

It's just east of New York Ave, so if you're coming from the west, make a U-turn at Sherry St. Volunteer parking is just south of the church and food is distributed on the west side of the church.



Thanksgiving Basket

THANKSGIVING BASKET PROGRAM

October 22 through November 12, First Presbyterian Church is again joining *Arlington Charities* in feeding those needing a little help during Thanksgiving. The Mission and Evangelism Team has set a:

210 Baskets Goal

Please sign up outside the Fellowship Hall or the Chapel to fill one or more of the Baskets (grocery sacks). You can sign up as an individual, a family, or a group. After you sign up, please pick up the numbered sack, which has a list of the needed items attached. The following items are needed:

Turkey...Donation of \$20 (Optional)

Stuffing Mix...1 package

Corn...2 Cans

Cranberry Sauce...1 Can

Green Beans...2 Cans

Chicken Broth...1 Can

Evaporated Milk...1 Can

Yams...1 Can

French Fried Onions...1 Can

Mac & Cheese...1 Box

Instant Potatoes...1 pkg

Cream of Mushroom Soup...1 Can

Brown Gravy Packet

Foil Roasting Pan...(Optional)

Canned items need to be 15-oz or smaller. No "family-size" packaging

Please make checks payable to *Arlington Charities*, designate "*Thanksgiving 2023*".

Please return all sacks to the 100 Hall by: **Sunday, November 12**

Thanks ~ The Mission and Evangelism Team

Did you know?

Did you know that we have an abundance of medical items that you can borrow or have if you need them either for a little while or a longer time?

Below are listed what items are available:

1. tray table
2. wheel chair (s)
3. shower chair (s)
4. crutches
5. canes
6. reachers or grabbers
7. wedge pillow
8. bedside commode
9. forearm crutch
10. tripod cane with seat

Please let me know how we can help you.

Thanks,
Marge Dawson
mdawsonarltx@gmail.com 817-980-6825

This Month



Bible Studies

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 Wednesday Women's Bible Study will meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. in the parlor. Questions? Contact Debbie Richardson at 817.675.2867 or Sheri Quick at sheriq@aol.com.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Men and women of all ages are invited to meet in the parlor every Tuesday morning at 10:30 a.m.

CWF Women's Bible Study

Meet virtually every Wednesday at 7 p.m. EXCEPT the last Wednesday of the month they meet at FPCA in the Parlor.



Music Ministries

Chancel Choir

Meets on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Ring of Praise Handbell Ensemble

Meets on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in room 106.

Youth Choir

Meets on Sundays, from 12:45 to 1:45 p.m. (lunch for participants 12:15).

Children's Music Ministries

Meets on Sundays, from 12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. (lunch for participants 12:15)



Church Leadership

Deacon Meeting

Thursday, Nov , at 7:00 p.m., the Diaconate meets in the parlor to oversee the Congregational Care, Hospitality, and Fellowship ministries.

Team Meeting Night

Thursday, Nov 2, teams meet for ministry planning and coordination.

Session Meeting

Thursday, Nov 16, 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.



Fellowship

Happy Quilters

This group meets on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. to quilt, sew, knit, crochet, embroider, and just enjoy being together. Bring your project and join in! Bring a sack lunch and join the ladies for lunch at noon.

Senior Flexibility Class

Come get fit with us! The Senior Flexibility Class will meet each week on Tuesday and Friday from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

If interested, contact Mary Spencer at 817-689-0526 for more details.

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

Deadline for the December issue of The News is November 15!

Prayer Ministry

Prayers for those with health and other concerns: Ron Forte, Jack Bos, Carol Browning, Bettye Burdett, Edna Collins, Jennyfer Delgado, Cyprian Engwenyi, Betty Farrell, Ivone Franzolin, Mary Lou Garrison, Joe and Lila Glenn, Jo Ann Hanson, Gary Lindley, Pat May and her son Tim Karnes, Graciela Lopez Montero, Mathias Mbeng Ndip, Tina Paulk, Aileigh Rodriguez, Tonya Scrabeck, David Spencer, Alecia Street, Susie Thurston, Donna Vickers, Nancy Welborne, Patrick Welborne, Danny Womble, Carlos Zamora.

Prayers for our family serving in the armed forces: Amie Murtha, Colin A. Peden

If you are a member with a family member who is on active duty in the armed services, please contact the church office at info@firstprestexas.org with the name and their relationship to you.

Prayers for our homebound members: Polly Baugh, Madge Casselman, Lucy Cleaver, Barbara Hughes, Betty Snowden, Dee Uhri, Richard Whitenight.

Pray for those who do not know Christ!

If you have any congregational care needs, please contact either Pastor Chris Campbell or Parish Pastor Jim Shroyer at 817-274-8286.

