



“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:11-12

December
2023

The News

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Newsletter Team

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Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

Psalm 107:1

Last month before our kids went on Thanksgiving break, Hudson’s elementary school put on their annual program. Each grade has a song or two they sing each year. So, after watching and listening to Colton work his way through, Chelsea and I pretty much know all the songs by heart now. Hudson’s class sang “Attitude of Gratitude.” There are a couple breaks in the song where some of the kids get to walk up to a microphone. Their classmates sing, “What are you grateful for?” There were lots of great and classic answers – family, a favorite Thanksgiving dish and so on. But Hudson had let me know he had a surprise for his answer. We eagerly watched him walk up to the mic. “What are you grateful for?” “I’m grateful for the world champion Texas Rangers!” Such a proud dad moment! I’ll never stop being grateful for that either! And the best part, not one trash can was damaged for this trophy! (I’ll never let that go either!)



The Christian attitude of gratitude is one that lasts all year round. It is not reserved for one day a year. As we work our way through Advent up to Christmas, as the busy-ness ramps up, don’t neglect to pause and remember what you are grateful for. And don’t forget to thank the source of all goodness!

Gratitude has been on full display around FPCA these past couple weeks. Our annual Thanksgiving baskets were a great success.

After church, you may have noticed a couple of our members climbing up trees to trim branches. Yes, chainsaws are fun. But they are doing that so the church can reallocate funds that would have paid for a service to come do that to fulfill our mission and ministry. Wow! I loved hearing Sonia Ellis share in worship how much our church means to her and their family – a true outpouring of gratitude. And I'm very grateful for those of you who have asked where the best place is to direct above and beyond year end gifts. While FPCA has a strong tradition of receiving these end of year gifts, we do not take them, nor you, for granted. I hope you hear our attitude of gratitude for you on a weekly basis!

Have a blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

Pastor Chris

Finance Update

For the month of October 2023:

Budget (Operating and Funds Released)

Income: \$ 76,806

Expense: (\$87,932)

Income - Expense for month: **(\$11,126)**

Income - Expense for 2023 Year to Date: **(\$87,509)**



Comments:

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

- begin our annual generosity campaign, BELIEVE, based on the scriptural teachings in the Apostles' Creed.
- have a great time at Trunk or Treat with candy, games, hot dogs, and big bubbles. This was a great time for the children of FPCA and the community.
- kick-off our annual Thanksgiving Basket Program, joining Arlington Charities in feeding those who, otherwise, may not be able to enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner.
- help one of our Embrace Grace girls who just had her baby and as a church family, help her with meals of love.
- provide an opportunity to serve by providing a ride for those who need a ride to church.
- start our new prayer card ministry.
- As of October, our Capital Campaign fund balance is \$1,485,559.

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

Christmas is such a special time of year! Preschoolers will experience a lot of excitement and wonder. We all do! But as they get older—and as we take time to stop and remember—we hope that the good news that God gave us Jesus will become the most wonderful part of Christmas. So get ready because we are hopping aboard the CHRISTMAS TRAIN, and it's carrying the true story of Christmas!

WEEK	BIBLE STORY	STORY FOCUS
ONE	The Angel and Mary Luke 1:26-33, 38	God tells Mary she is going to have His Son Jesus.
TWO	Jesus Is Born Luke 2:1-7	Jesus is born.
THREE	The Shepherds Luke 2:8-21	The shepherds run to Jesus.
FOUR	Happy Birthday, Jesus! Luke 1:26-33, 38, 2:1-21	Happy Birthday, Jesus!
FIVE	The Wise Men Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11	The wise men go to see Jesus, God's Son.

MEMORY VERSE	KEY QUESTION	BOTTOM LINE
"GOD LOVED THE WORLD SO MUCH THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON." JOHN 3:16, GNT	HOW DO WE KNOW GOD LOVES US?	GOD GAVE US JESUS.
GOD LOVES ME.		

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Elementary and KFC

DECK THE HALLS
 COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



ELEMENTARY
 DECEMBER 2023

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

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

With the busyness of the Christmas season, it's easy to lose sight of why we celebrate in the first place. We forget that at the time of the first Christmas, God's people were anticipating a Rescuer who would come and save the world. That's what makes a countdown like an advent calendar so powerful. It allows us daily moments to stop and reflect on God, who loved us so much and sent Jesus to be our Savior. This December, we're "decking the halls" and taking the whole month to focus on nothing but Christmas by celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift! We can't wait to shine a spotlight on crucial moments in the story of Jesus' birth as we count down to Christmas. Because of Jesus, it's possible for us to have a relationship with God that will last forever. As we take this month to count down to the fun of Christmas Day, let's take time to remember the reason we celebrate in the first place: Jesus, the greatest gift the world has ever known.

WEEK ONE	BIBLE STORY Jesus Is Promised Micah 5:2, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 7:14-15	BOTTOM LINE You can have hope because God is faithful.
WEEK TWO	BIBLE STORY Gabriel Appears to Mary Luke 1:26-56	BOTTOM LINE You can have peace because God has a plan.
WEEK THREE	BIBLE STORY Jesus Is Born Luke 2:1-7	BOTTOM LINE You can have joy because God sent Jesus.
WEEK FOUR	BIBLE STORY Shepherds and Angels Luke 2:8-20	BOTTOM LINE God's love is for everyone.
WEEK FIVE	BIBLE STORY Wise Men Matthew 2:1-12	BOTTOM LINE Celebrate Jesus all year long.

MEMORY VERSE	"A CHILD WILL BE BORN TO US. A SON WILL BE GIVEN TO US." <small>ISAIAH 9:6, NIRV</small>
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CHRISTMAS	CELEBRATING JESUS, GOD'S GREATEST GIFT
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Save the date.

December 1: Kids Night Out from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

December 10: Christmas Party after the worship service.

Youth Ministry

The Only Thing Your Kids Need for Christmas

by Leah Jennings

I don't know about you, but fun and variety is often in short supply when you're in the trenches of parenting. Even though I've tried to make our home life as entertaining as possible—especially around the holidays—there have been times when all I could muster was a forehead kiss before bed with the promise of reading double the bedtime stories tomorrow. Sometimes, this mama just doesn't have an ounce of energy left to give.

You know what else is often in short supply for a lot of parents? Money. For many of us, the economy has affected us in so many ways. From increased prices everywhere to tightened budgets, sometimes, it's all we can do to cover the basics. During the holidays, the reality of your financial situation can hit particularly hard.

This holiday season is going to be different in a lot of ways for a lot of people. Considering finances alone, it might feel like the holiday season has lost a bit of its magic. At least for me, I have to keep reminding myself of this one truth: Our kids won't remember what they got for Christmas this year. Our kids will remember how they felt this holiday season.

We don't have to have towering heaps of gifts under the tree or the perfect decorations to create lasting memories this year. Christmas magic isn't contingent on how much you spend. The spirit of Christmas lives and thrives even when resources are low.

Wanna know how? It's this word that literally costs nothing to execute—connection. What our kids really want from us is to be a present parent. Quality time is the name of the game this year, folks. So, maybe that looks like. . .

Creating brand-new holiday traditions.

Taking the ordinary and putting a special spin on it (think regular dinner, but adding a little candlelight).

Being intentional about spending more quality time together.

We will make it through this holiday season, friends. And who knows? It might be the best one yet.

Blessings in Christ,

Adrian

Monthly Food Bank

Join us Saturday, December 9, 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.



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

Prayer Request cards

“Make your requests known unto God...” Philippians 4:6

Have you seen the new Prayer Request cards that are now available for you?

Check out the two prayer stations in the lobby of the Fellowship Hall. There you will find prayer request cards, a depository box to place your card, and a Q and A that should answer any questions you may have.

If you have a prayer request, please take a card, write your request, and drop it in the wooden box or on an offering plate. Our Prayer Team collects the cards regularly and prays for each request. If your request is confidential, just mark the card as such and your request will be honored.

If you are a shut-in, please contact Jim Shroyer at 682-445-0155 for cards.

Our church is happy to extend our prayer ministry with you!

Family Living Class on the Go



A group from the Family Living Class enjoyed a very informative tour of the Top of the Hill Terrace/Casino at Arlington Baptist University including one of the secret escape tunnels. Did you know Arlington was "Vegas before Vegas"? We learned a lot of Arlington history and, of course, we relaxed and enjoyed time together as well.



Gifts of Hope 2023

FPCA will again be offering Gifts of Hope, an alternative gift market, with an opportunity for youth to participate in this creative and caring way to honor friends and family through donations to a wide range of outreach organizations. Using learning activities for youth, needs and the responses offered allow for selection of an organization and aid in designated amounts. Cards are provided to share with honored recipients to indicate the support of outreach organizations that show God's love around the globe.



Gifts of Hope will be available for purchase before and after worship on the first three Sundays in December as well as online through the website and files attached to the FPCA News emails. For more information contact Bob Dawson – text 214-415-5396.

URL: <https://firstprestexas.org/gifts/>

Two Special Offerings in December

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 Presbyterian Church - USA. The other goes to Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS). Special offering envelopes can be found outside the Fellowship Hall 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 brief accounts of those who have benefited from the Christmas Joy Offering, visit: <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>.

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, some services you might find helpful. 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

Advent Festival



The Mitten Tree

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

The Dove Tree

The Dove Tree will be up in the month of December near the Fellowship Hall. Each dove has the name of one of our home-bound 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.

The Lord's Supper at your home

The church will bring The Lord's Supper to your home. To schedule a time, please call Jim Shroyer, parish associate, at 682-445-0155.

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, Dec 14 at 7:00 p.m., the Diaconate meets in the parlor to oversee the Congregational Care, Hospitality, and Fellowship ministries.

Team Meeting Night

Thursday, Dec 7, teams meet for ministry planning and coordination.

Session Meeting

Thursday, Dec 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.



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 January issue of The News is December 15!

Prayer Ministry

Prayers for those with health and other concerns: Ken Floyd, Jerry Tees, the family of Connie Taylor, the family of Gary Lindley, Harold Thomlinson, Sherry Wolfe, Sheri Quick, Charlie Nieman, 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, 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, Christopher Young
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.

