



"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16

December
2024

The News

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Newsletter Team

Talita Gottmann, Editor

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

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Give Thanks

Christians know that we have much to be thankful for every day. Each day is a blessing. Each day is an opportunity. Each day is a day we have the privilege to live as the redeemed and liberated people of God. There are obviously challenges and obstacles that every person has to deal with. But through every adversity, God remains faithful.

Having just come off the Thanksgiving holiday, we at FPCA expressed our thanks to a couple special groups on Sunday November 24th. First, our Fellowship Team shouldered the yeoman’s task of providing the entire Thanksgiving lunch to our church and friends. I know this took lots of work, many hands, and many hours. So next time you see someone from the Fellowship Team, or leaders Frank Huneycutt and Ed Ayers, show your thanks for their delicious service!

Second, during the lunch, we recognized and thanked another group who has shouldered another giant task. On behalf of the session and the congregation, we thanked our Transform Team who have nearly reached the finish line of this phase of work. The session presented each member (Tina Hanson, Melina Pena, Russell Farnell, AJ Baker, Ross Dill, and Larry Stephenson) with a thank you card and a gift card. As you walk through the entire building, you will see results of their work. But what most people have not seen is the day in and day out presence of team members literally putting sweat equity into our church. Most of us do not see the after church meetings, weeknight meetings, phone and zoom calls, meetings with contractors and a whole host of other people. We enjoy the fruits of their labor, but the labor has been much. Throughout it all, others who have helped with special projects and tasks along the way deserve our thanks. And I am thankful for the

attitude of our church and staff as we have navigated this process. The disruptions have been substantial and annoying. There have been plenty of times where whining and gnashing of teeth would have been appropriate. But FPCA has handled this gracefully showing much grace with one another. And I truly believe that reflects the grace God has put in our hearts, hearts full of thanks each and every day.

Pastor Chris

chris@firstprestexas.org

Finance Update

General Fund for October 2024:

	Monthly	YTD
Income & Funds Released:	92,998	825,715
<u>Expenses:</u>	(87,104)	(892,699)
Variance	5,895	(66,984)
Donors Income:	84,950	720,096
<u>Budget:</u>	75,817	758,170
Variance	9,133	(38,074)

Comments:

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

- begin our fall generosity campaign called "Align" where we focused on being intentional in remaining aligned with God and his purposes for our lives and his church.
- have a great time at Trunk or Treat with candy, games, hot dogs, giant bubbles, and sidewalk chalk. 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.
- have a luncheon for families with children or youth and enjoy lunch and connect with other families who have children or youth along with some of the leaders in the children's and youth ministries.
- As of October, our Capital Campaign fund balance is \$44,015.

We are doing well, and, because of you, we can 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

Show and Tell is always a favorite. Children have so much fun looking for the most special thing they can find to show their friends, and what each child shares helps teachers and friends get to know them a little bit better by seeing what is most valuable to them.

This month, we're taking a look at the ultimate Show and Tell. God showed the world how much He loves us by giving us Jesus. That is what we celebrate at Christmas, and that is what we will continue to show the world through our actions and tell with our words.

WEEK ONE	BIBLE STORY The Angel and Mary Luke 1:26-33, 38	STORY FOCUS God sends an angel to tell Mary she is going to have His son, Jesus.
WEEK TWO	BIBLE STORY Jesus Is Born Luke 2:1-7	STORY FOCUS Jesus is born to show the world that God loves us.
WEEK THREE	BIBLE STORY The Shepherds Luke 2:8-20	STORY FOCUS The shepherds run to see Jesus and then run to tell everyone about Jesus.
WEEK FOUR	BIBLE STORY Happy Birthday, Jesus!* Luke 1:26-33, 38; 2:1-20	STORY FOCUS We celebrate Christmas to show everyone that Jesus is special.
WEEK FIVE	BIBLE STORY The Wise Men Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11	STORY FOCUS The wise men travel a long way to show Jesus they believe He is special.
MEMORY VERSE	KEY QUESTION	BOTTOM LINE
"GOD HAS GIVEN A SON TO US." ISAIAH 9:6, NCV	WHY IS JESUS SPECIAL?	JESUS IS GOD'S SON.
GOD LOVES ME.		

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*Monthly Story for Toddler Curriculum

Elementary and KFC



ELEMENTARY

DECEMBER 2024

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

GOD VIEW:

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

Have you ever stopped to listen to a group of carolers and then joined them to go spread some more Christmas cheer with others? Music is such a big part of Christmas, but it's not the main reason we celebrate. It's easy to get distracted with all the lights, presents, and traditions that sometimes we forget it's not about the things we do, but Who we do it for and why we do it.

That's why this December, we're singing loudly as we jam out to our Christmas Playlist to celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift! 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 get in the mix this Christmas season, 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	BOTTOM LINE
	In the Beginning Was the Word John 1:1-5, 14	God always had a plan to send Jesus.
WEEK TWO	An Angel Appears to Mary and Joseph Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-25	Celebrate because God is with you.
WEEK THREE	Jesus Is Born Luke 2:1-7	Celebrate because God sent a Savior.
WEEK FOUR	Shepherds and Angels Luke 2:8-20	Celebrate Jesus with others.
WEEK FIVE	Wise Men Matthew 2:1-12	Never stop celebrating Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE

"[MARY] IS GOING TO HAVE A SON. YOU MUST GIVE HIM THE NAME JESUS. THAT'S BECAUSE HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."
MATTHEW 1:21, NIRV

CHRISTMAS

CELEBRATING JESUS, GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

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Save the Date

December 6: Kids Night Out from 6-8 p.m.

December 8: Christmas Party after the Worship Service.

June 2-6: Vacation Bible School

Youth Ministry

10 Ways to Prepare for the Holiday Season

by Dr. Jim Burns

Here it comes, right on cue! It's November already, and the Christmas commercials have started appearing on television, stores are all decked with holly, and your kids are probably already begging for new "stuff" under the Christmas tree.

For many of us, the holiday season is a time that is anticipated with both joy and anxiety. Sure, we love the celebrations, the family traditions, and we cherish the memories of holidays gone by; but along with them, we add the stresses of preparation, expectations and the fear of letdowns, or family squabbles that we have experienced in the past. In a real sense, many of us are looking straight into the face of the holi-daze, not the holidays. With this in mind, here are 10 tips that can help restore some sanity to your family, and hopefully make for an enjoyable, meaningful holiday season.

1. Set manageable expectations.

Spend some time now setting realistic and manageable expectations for your holiday season. So, be realistic and upfront about what your family can do. Make a list of what is possible and prioritize your most important events and activities for you and your family. Then, pace yourself. **Organize your time.** Keep in mind that it's the holiday "season" (not "day") and spread out your activities to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.

2. Remember the holiday season does not eliminate sadness or loneliness.

Old problems and difficulties continue, and new ones can arise during the holiday season. And for some, the holiday season evokes painful memories from recent events or the loss of loved ones. Give room for yourself and your family to experience and express these feelings. But try not to let them become a consuming focus. **Make an effort to work through present challenges and conflicts.**

3. Acknowledge the past but look toward the future.

Life brings changes. Each season of life is different. Determine to enjoy this holiday season for what it is. Acknowledging the past, whether it was good or bad, is appropriate. But, if you find that this year has been a rough one and you don't anticipate having the best holiday season ever, try not to set yourself up for disappointment by comparing today with the "good old days." **Take advantage of the joys the present holiday season has to offer.**

4. Develop and encourage a life of gratitude.

Gratitude is an attribute that transcends circumstances. No matter what your circumstances, I believe there is reason to be thankful in them. Your circumstances may never change, but your attitude toward them can change . . . and this can make all the difference. For Christians, giving thanks should be an everyday occurrence, and not just something we do on Thanksgiving Day. We have a special reason to adopt the attitude of gratitude, because we know that whatever comes, our times are in God's hands. It was Jesus who said in effect, "So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow, too." (See Matthew 6:34.)

If you want to help your kids develop an attitude of gratitude, I encourage you to try an experiment that might radically influence your family, and it's a great exercise in the days leading up to

Thanksgiving or Christmas for that matter. It's called "Thank Therapy." Thank Therapy is simply focusing on the many things in your life for which you can be thankful. **Get started by having each family member create individual lists of "Twenty Reasons Why I'm Thankful." Share your lists as a family on Thanksgiving or Christmas Day.**

5. Do something for someone else.

One of the ways we can demonstrate that we are grateful to God for His many blessings is to help others. Even if this has been a difficult year for you and your family, helping others will help you too, as your focus will move from your own circumstances into serving others. There are always people who can use a helping hand. **So, enrich this holiday season for your family by getting involved in serving others.**

6. Enjoy activities that are cheap or free.

There are many good holiday-related activities that will add to your family's enjoyment that are either free or low-cost such as driving around to look at Christmas decorations, decorating your home together as a family, baking Christmas cookies, going window-shopping, or playing in the snow (or on the beach if you live in Southern California like me).

7. Enjoy a family holiday tradition.

Traditions provide opportunities to keep your family's legacy going. They create meaningful memories. So from the silly to the sentimental, if your family has established Thanksgiving and Christmas traditions, be sure to include them in your holiday activity plans if possible.

8. Try something new.

Traditions are great, but sometimes families find themselves in a rut, celebrating the holidays in exactly the same fashion, year after year. This can result in your family experiencing a holiday funk. Think about finding a new way to celebrate the holiday season this year. You may just create a new tradition that will keep going for generations!

9. Spend money responsibly.

Thanks to our culture and the well-thought out marketing strategies by retailers, the holiday season always brings with it a big temptation to spend lots of money, especially when it comes to purchasing Christmas presents for your family. Don't be afraid to say no to this temptation. The following is simple but good advice for every family: Don't spend beyond your means and don't rack up significant credit card debt! While your family may be thrilled by expensive gifts on Christmas Day, don't forget that come springtime, your kids may have laid aside or forgotten those gifts, even while you're struggling to make the payments. **Decide now to be financially responsible this holiday season!**

10. Carve out some time for yourself!

Don't take on all of the responsibilities of your family's holiday celebrations by yourself. Share the load. For example, assign responsibilities to your family members for preparation and clean-up of your Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. **Create some space during the holidays for you to recharge your own batteries.**

Blessings,

Adrian

Monthly Food Bank

Join us Saturday, December 14, 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 is 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.



Welcome Team – help us welcome guests!

We want to make sure that guests are always welcomed when they enter our church, and that someone is available to answer any questions they may have. They may need help finding the nursery, the restrooms, etc. We have two Welcome Team members each Sunday currently, but soon will need four, when the current phase of construction is complete. Beginning June 30, there will be a Welcome Team poster and sign-up sheet in the Narthex where you can sign up to be part of the team for a particular date. Welcome Team members arrive at 10:30am and are available at a designated entrance. One team member will need to remain in the narthex for the entire service and the others can join the congregation in the sanctuary approximately 10 minutes after the service starts at 11:00am.

Help us show guests that we are glad they are here! Help us make guests feel welcome! Help us show God's love to guests by greeting them warmly and answering any questions they may have.

Blood Drive

Sunday, December 15 in Fellowship Hall from 8:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Appointments can be made online:

https://www.greatpartners.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/156690

or contact Bob Dawson (214-415-5396) to make an appointment.

Allow 45 minutes for a donation.

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 in the narthex or you can designate on a blank envelope or on the memo line of your check which offering you are supporting.



A Presbyterian tradition for over 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 with services you or someone you know might find helpful. To find out more about the many services PCHAS offers, visit: <https://www.pchas.org/who-we-are/pchas-way>.

Submitted by Sheri Quick and Bob Dawson

Mission and Evangelism Team

Gifts of Hope

FPCA will again be offering Gifts of Hope, an alternative gift market, with an opportunity for you to participate in this creative and caring way to honor friends and family through donations to a wide range of outreach organizations. Cards are provided to share with honored recipients to indicate the support of outreach organizations that shows God's love around the globe. Gifts of Hope will be available for purchase before and after worship the first three Sundays in December. For more information contact Suzie McCoy – txt 817-271-5995.

An Advent Festival



An Advent Festival
a service of worship in song
celebrating the coming of the Savior with
choirs of children, youth, adults, and handbells,
along with readings and congregational carols

Sunday, December 8
11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary

featuring *A Ceremony of Carols*
by Benjamin Britten

First Presbyterian Church
1200 S. Collins St Arlington, TX 76010
www.firstprestexas.org

Christmas with Texas Boys Choir

FPCA MUSIC MINISTRIES
PRESENT

Christmas

WITH
TEXAS BOYS CHOIR
SATURDAY, DEC. 14
7 PM IN THE SANCTUARY

This Month



Bible Studies

Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study group meets every Wednesday morning at 8:00 a.m. in room 204. 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 resume on September meeting 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

Meet on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Chancel Choir.

b

Ring of Praise Handbell Ensemble

Meet on Wednesdays September 4th, at 6 p.m. in room 106.

Youth Choir

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

Children's Music Ministries

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



Church Leadership

Deacon Meeting

Will resume in January, the Diaconate meets.

Team Meeting Night

Thursday, December 5th, at 7:00 p.m., all teams meet for ministry planning and coordination.

Session Meeting

Thursday, December 19, at 7:00 p.m., the Session meets 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: Ann Scarr, Jennifer Meyer, Charles Arnold, Jo Ann Nichols, Bob Hanson and his family, Mia Navarro and her family, Billie Jo Campbell, Carol Browning, Bettye Burdett, Cyprain Engwenyi, Betty Farrell, Ken Floyd, Bobbie Fowler, Ivone Franzolin, Mary Lou Garrison, Joe and Lila Glenn, Pat May and her son Tim Karnes, Graciela Lopez Montero, Mathias Mbeng Ndip, Charlie Nieman, Tina Paulk, Jim and Sheri Quick, Aileigh Rodriguez, Eleanor Schernbeck, Tonya Scrabeck, Lorna Snyder, David Spencer, Larry Spencer, Susie Thurston, Donna Vickers, Nancy Welborne, Patrick Welborne, Sherry and Shelby Wolfe, Danny Womble.

Prayers for our family serving in the armed forces: Colin A. Peden, Christopher Young, Wolfgang Van Wie.

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: Madge Casselman, Lucy Cleaver, 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.

