

The News

The monthly newsletter of
First Presbyterian Church Arlington



“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth..”

- John 1:14

December 2025

Table of Contents

Prayer Ministry.....3
December news.....4
November joys.....5
Bible studies
and groups.....6-7
Build
connections.....8
Community
outreach.....9
Finance update.....10
Children’s
Ministry.....11
Prayer list.....12

Newsletter Team

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Deadline for the January
newsletter is December 15.

The Messiah

“So this is Christmas...”

Okay, that is not the opening line to Handel’s masterpiece. But when thinking about Christmas, Advent, music, that line from John Lennon is what first popped into my head.

Christmas music has been in full rotation in stores and theme parks (Holiday in the Park at Six Flags) since before Thanksgiving. While I think that should be a felony offense, that is a battle I gave up fighting long ago.

Many of you know I have a music background. I started piano lessons in first grade. After a brief break around junior high time, I picked it back up and kept studying piano and music throughout college.

While I was not a piano performance major, I loved and still love music history. Before sensing a call into ministry, I thought I was on track to earn a master’s degree and do the only thing you can do with a music history degree: teach.

So in addition to sports and BBQ, music is another passion I love to see intersect with faith and theology.

Handel’s Messiah is a magnificent example of this. Through the four Sundays of Advent and the two Sundays of Christmas, we will look at certain scriptures, themes, and phrases that inspired the creation of The Messiah. These are:

Expectation: The Comforter Has Come

Revelation: The Glory of the Lord Shall Be Revealed

Proclamation: Unto Us a Child Is Born

Celebration: Glory to God

Adoration: Hallelujah!

Illumination: Wise Men Still Seek Him

I hope as we move through Advent into Christmas, you will find time to enjoy this beautiful music once again. More importantly, I hope the faith behind and within the music gives you hope in this Advent season.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

- Pastor Chris

Prayer ministry



Offering up the best

Reading through Leviticus, we're reminded that our God is not distant or vague. He is profoundly present in the details.

The Israelites didn't need to ask what to do; the instructions were precise. But surely, they must have asked why. Why such specificity? Why such repetition?

One detail in particular stands out: the command that "all its fat shall be offered." Again and again, fat is described as "belonging to the Lord," burned on the altar as a "pleasing aroma."

Why fat? In their world, fat wasn't waste – it was the richest, most desirable part of the ani-

mal. It symbolized abundance, strength, and blessing. And God asked for it. Not the scraps. Not the excess. The best.

So now we ask ourselves: do we understand the why?

God desires our best. Not our leftovers. Not what's convenient. Not what's easy to part with. He asks for the richest part of our lives – our time, our attention, our devotion, our creativity, our compassion.

And He modeled this first. Did God give His best? Absolutely. In Christ, He gave everything.

So how can we not? Where do we hold back?

The Little Man

Beginning Oct. 26, our Prayer Ministry unveiled *The Little Man* – a 16-week visual storytelling experience to inspire reflection on the choices we make and the paths we follow. Each week, a new image will be added to the unfolding story along the east wall of the Fellowship Hall hallway.

To deepen the experience, our weekly E-News will feature a short devotional insight drawn from the previous week's image – an invitation to pause, reflect, and engage with the journey in your own life.

Watch for the E-News each week, and join us as we walk alongside *The Little Man*, exploring the quiet courage of decision-making and the grace that meets us along the way.

December news

Honor our members on the Dove Tree

The Dove Trees are up in the Narthex and Cross Hall. Each dove has a name and address of one of our homebound members. Advent is a great time to spread love and grace them this season with a small gift, card, poinsettia, and visit to brighten the holidays.



Join us for Merry and Bright Night Dec. 2

The Women's Ministry Team invites you to enjoy a night of fellowship and fun with your sisters in Christ as we celebrate the start of Advent and the Christmas season. Take a night away from the to-do lists and let's savor an evening relishing some nibbles, laughing with friends, playing Bunco, and just enjoying being together. Can't wait to see you there! The event is free, but let us know you're coming. Register here or email womensministry@firstprestexas.org.

Children and Youth Christmas party Dec. 7

All Children and Youth Families, please join us for a joyful celebration filled with laughter, love, and holiday cheer on Dec. 7 in Fellowship Hall right after worship. Come ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus and make memories. We can't wait to see you there!

Mark your holiday calendars

Advent Festival - Dec. 7 at 11 a.m. - The service will celebrate the four-week period of expectant waiting with a focus on preparation, reflection, and anticipation of Jesus's birth.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7:30 - Celebrate Christ's light coming into the world with worship, reflection, and community.

Mobile Food Market dates

Arlington Charities is hosting mobile food markets twice in December.

Distribution lines form early and distribution ends when the food is gone.

- Dec. 13 at 8:30 a.m. - St. Andrews United Methodist Church at 2045 S.E. Green Oaks Blvd.

- Dec. 18 at 9 a.m. - Tarrant County College at 2100 Southeast Parkway.



Poinsettia orders due by Dec. 7

Help prepare the sanctuary to celebrate the birth of the Savior by ordering a poinsettia that will be in place through the Christmas season. Poinsettia orders can be dedicated in honor or memory of a loved one. Order forms are available in the Narthex or online in the E News. Place completed forms in the basket or the offering plate, or bring it to the church office. The cost is \$13 each, and the deadline is Dec. 7.

November joys

1. Pastor Chris Campbell cuddles Clark Gottmann, who will be baptized at FPCA Dec. 14.



1.

2. Melina Pena enjoys turkey and fixings at the all-church Thanksgiving luncheon Nov. 16.



2.

3. Music Ministry interns Matthew Stringer, Nicholas Karr, Elizabeth English, and Emily Ledesma perform at the Nov. 16 worship service.



3.



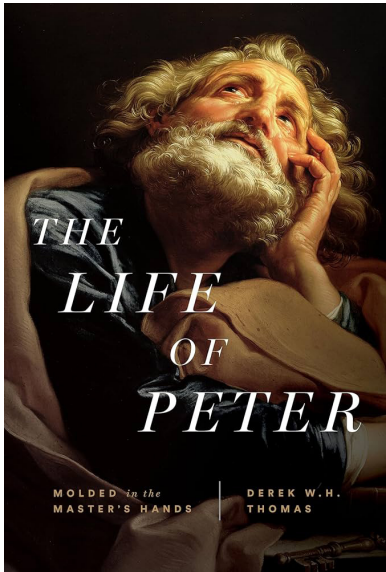
4.

Team First Presbyterian Church participated in the Arlington Alzheimer's Walk Nov. 22 at Texas Live. The event supported families and friends who have members battling this disease and those families who have lost loved ones because of Alzheimer's.

Bible studies and groups

Tuesday Morning Bible Study for Men and Women

Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. to noon in the Fellowship Hall



The new study is *The Life of Peter: Molded in the Master's Hands*. In this teaching series, Dr. Derek W. H. Thomas offers an encouraging portrait of Peter from the Gospels and the book of Acts, with insights from Peter's own writings later in

life. Understanding Peter's transformation from the brash fisherman into the bold Apostle can guide us in pursuit of our own growth in grace.

The study is written by Derek W. H. Thomas who served as a senior minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, S.C. He is Chancellor's Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary.

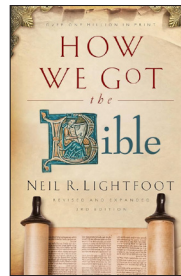
Study guides are provided. If you wish to buy one, the price is \$15.

Book studies coming to a Sunday School class near you soon



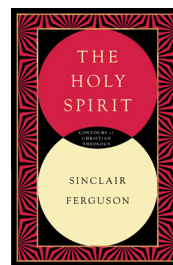
- **Basic Christianity** by John Stott

Basic Christianity is a classic introduction to the Christian faith and a refresher course in Christianity's essentials. Stott explains Christian beginnings, beliefs, and behavior.



- **How We Got the Bible** by Neil R. Lightfoot

A factual account of how the Bible has been preserved and handed down to our generation, including discussions on recent Bible translations.

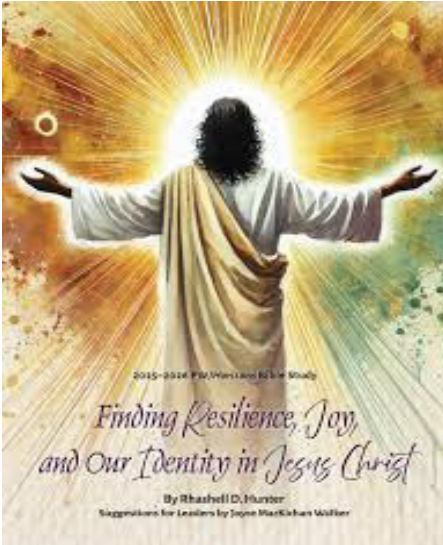


- **Who Is the Holy Spirit?** by Sinclair B. Ferguson

A theological work that explores the identity and role of the Holy Spirit, focusing on the "who" of the Spirit as much as the "what" and "how" of His work. It aims to help readers understand the Holy Spirit as a person, tracing His presence and work throughout scripture from creation to the redemption of believers today.

Bible studies and groups

Wednesday Women's Bible Study Second Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. in Fellowship Hall



The Wednesday Women's Bible Study resumes their Bible Study meetings.

The study is the Horizon's Presbyterian Women's study *Finding Resilience, Joy, and our Identity*

in Jesus Christ. In this Bible study, we will explore resilience modeled for us by several biblical characters, gospel and epistle writers, and Jesus. The Bible study is also about finding joy in a chaotic world. Trusting in God when we are in trying times can fill us with glorious joy and peace. We will also seek to rediscover our identity in Jesus Christ.

We welcome all women. The group meets monthly on the second Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Questions? Please reply to Debbie Richardson (817.675.2867) or der817@gmail.com or Sheri Quick (sheriq@aol.com).

Men's Bible Study Wednesdays at 8 a.m. in room 204

The Men's Bible Study group meets every Wednesday morning at 8 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. We will not be meeting Dec. 24 or Dec. 31.

CFW Women's Bible Study Wednesdays at 7 p.m. online

The CFW Women's Bible Study group meets virtually every Wednesday at 7 p.m. except for the last Wednesday of the month when the group meets at FPCA in the parlor. For December, however, the group will meet online all month.

Holiday Saints Alive Luncheon Thursday, Dec. 11 at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Come one, come all: Please come and join with us for Saints Alive! We will have a Holiday Saints Alive in December on Thursday, Dec 11. Saints Alive is a bring-your-favorite-dish luncheon at 11:30. (Come early if you'd like to visit before lunch.)

Build connections

Bible and book studies

(see full descriptions of studies on pages 6-7)

Tuesday Morning Bible Study for Men and Women

- Tuesdays 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Wednesday Women's Bible Study

- Second Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Men's Bible Study

- Wednesdays at 8 a.m. in room 204
- We will not be meeting Dec. 24 or Dec. 31

CWF Women's Bible Study

- Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

- HOPE Tutoring Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Church leadership

- Prayer Ministry Council Dec. 4 at 1 p.m.

Team meetings

Dec. 4 at 4:30 and 7 p.m.
All teams meet for ministry planning and coordination.

Deacon meeting and dinner

Dec. 11 at 5:30 in the Parlor

- Session meeting

Dec. 18 at 7 p.m.
The Session meets to oversee the ministry of the church, worship, budget, and other matters.

Music Ministries

Chancel choir

- Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m.

Ring of Praise Handbell Ensemble

- Wednesdays at 6 p.m.

Children and Youth Music Ministries

- Sunday, Dec. 7 at 12:45 p.m. with lunch provided at 12:15

Fellowship and community groups

- Senior Flexibility Class Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

Come get fit with us! We meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Contact Mary Spencer at 817.689.0526 for more details.

- Quilting group - Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

This group meets on Wednesdays 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.

- Women's Ministry Merry and Bright Night

- Dec. 2 at 7 p.m. in the Parlor

See page 6 for details

- Holiday Saints Alive Luncheon

We will meet Thursday, Dec. 11 at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

See page 9 for details

Community outreach

Arlington Life Shelter Needs:

- **Food Donation Pick Up Helper:** We need someone who can travel to food establishments in the area to pick up food items and deliver them to the shelter.
- **Provide a Meal:** Grab a team, faith group, or your family and friends and cook a meal for residents. We need Food Team Volunteers to purchase, prepare, and serve meals. Email alice.morris@arlingtonliveshelter.org for meal guidelines and available dates.
- **PALS:** Partners of Arlington Life Shelter is an auxiliary group that raises funds for the shelter and provides special events such as birthday and holiday parties for the residents.
For more information on how to volunteer, please contact alice.morris@arlingtonliveshelter.org.

Spread holiday warmth with Mitten Tree donations

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 Trees! These will be given to Arlington Charities for children and adults in time for Christmas. The Mitten Tree is located near the Narthex and Cross Halls. Please stop by and make someone's Christmas happy and warm.

Gifts of Hope:

FPCA will again be offering Gifts of Hope, an alternative gift market, with an oppor-



tunity to honor friends and family through donations to a wide range of outreach organizations. Cards are provided to share with honored recipients. Gifts of Hope will be available for purchase before and after worship the first three Sundays in December as well as online through the website. For more information, contact Bob Dawson at 214.415.5396.

Mission Arlington Needs:

Community Service volunteers are a blessing to Mission Arlington, and they form a substantial team to help us accomplish what we do here every day. Visit mission-arlington.org for specifics.

Our hours are Monday through Saturday: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. No appointment necessary. Please come in whenever it works best for you. You will be working with the administration of food, clothes, household items and furniture – sorting, separating, carrying, and distributing.

Please wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty, and come with a flexible spirit, ready to work wherever you are needed.

Finance update



FINANCE UPDATE

General Fund for October 2025:

	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income & Funds Released:	87,670	962,730
<u>Expenses:</u>	<u>(80,610)</u>	<u>(934,026)</u>
Variance	7,060	28,704
Donors Income:	69,231	755,959
<u>Budget:</u>	<u>75,085</u>	<u>750,850</u>
Variance	(5,854)	5,109

Comments:

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

- introduce our fall generosity campaign called "Next Step" which provides an accessible opportunity to learn about different qualities of discipleship and to help each of us put them into daily action.
- have a great time at our Trunk or Treat outreach which was full of fun, spirit, and 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.
- Celebrate Reformation Sunday and the tradition which grounds the Presbyterian faith.

As of October, our Capital Campaign fund balance is \$13,483.

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



December KFC overview

During KFC in December we will be learning about the season of Advent.

Weekly Curriculum Summaries:

Dec. 7: The Bible passages will be Luke 1:5-25, 57-66, and Matthew 3:1-6. This week we'll hear how God gave Zechariah and Elizabeth a baby, John, who would grow up to prepare the way for Jesus. John helped guide people towards God, showing us how God gives people to guide us.

Dec. 14: The Bible passages will be Luke 1:26-38 and James 5:7-11. This week we'll hear how an angel visited Mary to announce she would give birth to Jesus, who would help bring a new hope to the world. Faced with unexpected news, Mary found hope in God's faithfulness, showing us how God gives hope to guide us.

Dec. 21: The Bible passages will be Luke 2:1-20 and Isaiah 7:10-16. This week, we'll hear how angels guided a group of shepherds to Bethlehem so they could be the first people to meet Jesus. Their incredible journey was an important sign for everyone that God gives a Savior to guide us.

Dec. 28: The Bible passage will be Matthew 2:1-23. This week we'll hear how God used a shining star to help guide the Magi to Jesus, and they even brought him gifts! Their journey to Bethlehem is an incredible reminder that God gives direction to guide us.

December Memory Verse:

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
John 8:12

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

Prayer ministry

Prayers for those with health and other concerns:

Charles Arnold, Carol Browning, Judy Crowell, Cyprain Engwenyi, Betty Farrell, Ken Floyd, Bobbie Fowler, Ivone Franzolin, Jay and Susan Graham, Nancy Guerry, Elaine Keefer, Bob and Beverly Koch, Lisa Landolt, Margaret Landolt, Shawn LeBlanc, Pat May and her son Tim Karnes, Judy Reck, Debbie Richardson, Lisa Scrobeck, Tonya Scrobeck, David Spencer, Drew Stephenson, Susie Thurston, Donna Vickers, Nancy Welborne, Patrick Welborne, Sherry and Shelby Wolfe, Danny Womble

Prayers for family in the armed forces:

Jeff Grimes, Nathan Haerer, Wolfgang Van Wie, Christopher Young

Prayers for our home-bound members:

Bettye Burdett, Madge Casselman, Judy Crowell, Margaret Fite, Bobbie Fowler, Lila Glenn, Jay and Susan Graham, Teresa Hanson, Ann Scarr, Becky Speck, Leonard and Mary Jane Tibbetts, Dee Uhri, Biddie Walker

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.