

# THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

DECEMBER 2021 | Volume 21, Number 12



## Advent and Christmas

### AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

#### MUSICAL SERMON FROM MESSIAH

*Sunday, December 12, 9 and 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary*

On Sunday, December 12, at 9 and 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary (no 8 a.m. service that day) the Chancel and Fellowship Choirs and soloists, accompanied by small orchestra and organ, will present selections from Handel's *Messiah* as the sermon.

#### MIDDAY PRAYER SERVICES

*Wednesdays, December 1, 8, 15, and 22,*

*12-12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary*

These 30-minute services include scripture, music, prayer, and reflections by clergy on the spiritual impact of Advent as a season preparing us to celebrate Emmanuel - God with us.

#### FOLLOW THE STAR LIVE NATIVITY

*Sunday, December 12, 5:30 to 7 p.m.*

Follow the Star to the manger! Visitors walk a lighted path and visit Mary and Joseph journeying to Bethlehem, the Innkeeper, and the Holy Family, complete with live animals. We will walk the nativity and then enjoy a grilled cheese sandwich and tomato soup dinner together. This free event is open to all; bring your family and friends! For more information, contact Ann Nielsen (817.335.1231 or [anielsen@fpcfw.org](mailto:anielsen@fpcfw.org)).

#### ADVENT MIDDAY ORGAN CONCERTS

*Wednesdays, December 1, 8, 15, and 22,*

*12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary*

These concerts will be held immediately following the Noon Advent service in the Sanctuary. Featured organists are Katie Scheetz, organist at Highland Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, on December 1; YangSun (Sunny) Yu, organist at FPC Dallas, on December 8; Jordan Smith, Director of Music at St. Stephen Presbyterian Church, on December 15; and Yunjung Lee, interim organist of First United Methodist Church of Arlington, on December 22.

#### CHRISTMAS EVE BRUNCH AT COMMUNITY CROSSROADS

*Thursday, December 24, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.*

You're invited to a festive holiday brunch at Community Crossroads with your church and Crossroads families! We'll eat and enjoy seasonal music, then head to FPC to attend the Noon Christmas Eve worship service together. There is no charge for brunch, but RSVPs are requested. To RSVP, contact Deneice Allen in the church office ([dallen@fpcfw.org](mailto:dallen@fpcfw.org) or 817.335.1231) or visit [fpcfw.org/crossroads](http://fpcfw.org/crossroads).

#### SERVICE OF WHOLENESS & HEALING

*Sunday, December 19, 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel*

Join us for this monthly Wholeness and Healing worship service in the manner of the Taizé community in France, specifically celebrating the Advent season and Christmas. Includes prayer, simple music, and scripture.

#### CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

*Friday, December 24*

Noon - Service of lessons and carols (Sanctuary)

7 p.m. - Service with candlelight (Sanctuary)

Childcare provided at 7 p.m.

The 7 p.m. service will also be livestreamed on the church website at [fpcfw.org/livestream](http://fpcfw.org/livestream)

5 p.m. - Service for families with children (Great Hall)

9 p.m. - Service with communion & candlelight (Sanctuary)



# PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

As you read this article, we are entering the season of Advent. November 28 is the first Sunday in Advent – the liturgical season which prepares us for the celebration of Christmas. Advent is a season of expectant hope where we once again prepare ourselves to celebrate the mystery of Christmas, the Incarnation, God with Us.

Might I suggest that as we enter this Advent, we take time to be attentive not to how we prepare ourselves, but to how God is preparing us as we engage in the rhythm of worship, study, reflection, care, and service through First Presbyterian Church. Christian Educator Maria Harris wrote in her classic book *Fashion Me a People*, that we are formed in our faith through the ongoing life of the church. All areas of the church's life shape and form us.

This Advent season we are being formed by God in the usual rhythms of our congregation. (Worship, Church School, Youth Groups, Small Groups, Care Teams, Mission Outreach, etc.) Advent also offers us unique experiences in which to experience God shaping and forming us in our life of Christian faith and discipleship.

As you explore this edition of *The Penn Street Letter*, take note of the many special opportunities this Advent to be nurtured and formed in your faith. From Advent Midday Prayers to a Service of Wholeness and Healing, from the Christmas Toy Store to Christmas Eve brunch at Community Crossroads, from a sermon in song with choir and orchestra on December 12 to four Christmas Eve worship services, from small groups to prayer circles, and so much more. God is actively preparing us to experience the mystery of the Incarnation at Christmas in ever deepening ways. May our eyes, ears, minds, and hearts be open to God with Us in ways that make this season holy indeed.

God's peace to you,

*Michael*

## Year-End Giving Reminder

Please keep the following guidelines in mind when planning your year-end giving to First Presbyterian.

You must deliver or mail (and postmark) checks on or by December 31, 2021, to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2021. Although checks in the offering on the first Sunday in 2022 can be recorded to fulfill a 2021 pledge to the church, they will not qualify for an IRS charitable contribution deduction for 2021, even if the check is predated to 2021 or actually written in 2021. However, checks that are written, mailed, and postmarked in 2021 will be deductible, even though they were not received by the church until 2022. To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions under current IRS guidelines, please do not file your 2021 income tax return until you have received a written acknowledgement of your contributions from the church. Some of your contributions may not be tax deductible if you file your return before receiving a written acknowledgement of your contributions.

**Note about Online Gifts:** Online gifts will be credited according to the date and time the online gift is submitted.

## ALL CHURCH BRUNCH

Sunday, December 5

12 NOON | GREAT HALL

All are invited and everyone eats for free! Let's get together in Christmas Joy to share a meal and give thanks for God's gift of Jesus Christ.

*Hosted by the Stewardship Committee.*

## SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the JANUARY issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, DECEMBER 15**. Submissions for the weekly Penn Street Online emailed newsletters are due the Wednesday prior to each week's issue. Please send to Pam Burkholder at [pamb@fpcf.org](mailto:pamb@fpcf.org).

## FOLLOW US

Do you follow First Presbyterian on social media? If not, find us on the following sites and follow along for photos, reminders, encouragement, and more.



@firstpresfw



@firstpres\_fw



@firstpres\_fw

## PUBLISHER INFO

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School of  
Spiritual  
Formation

For upcoming classes, visit:  
**FPCFW.ORG/SPIRITUALFORMATION**

To register for either of these opportunities, and to learn about other upcoming classes, visit [fpcfw.org/spiritualformation](http://fpcfw.org/spiritualformation), or contact the church office.

**SHALOM:** Desmond Tutu wrote a book, *God Has a Dream*. In it, he echoes MLK, saying, “God says to you, ‘I have a dream. Please help me to realize it. It is a dream of a world whose ugliness and squalor and poverty, its war and hostility, its greed and harsh competitiveness, its alienation and disharmony are changed into their glorious counterparts. When there will be more laughter, joy, and peace, where there will be justice and goodness and compassion and love and caring and sharing. I have a dream that my children will know that they are members of one family, the human family, God’s family, my family.’”

These great men took a comprehensive look at scripture and recognized that God’s vision of how we were to live with one another and with God permeates all of scripture. MLK called the dream, “the beloved community;” Desmond Tutu, “Ubuntu.” The Old Testament calls it “Shalom;” the New Testament, “Eirene.”

This 8-week course will trace God’s dream of shalom as it was introduced in Genesis and fulfilled in Revelation, exploring the richness of shalom blessings and the urgency of human responsibility in co-creating it. The course will explore how, through covenants, law, prophets, Jesus Christ, and the early church, God’s dream was both kept alive and revealed in ever greater depth.

Carol Toombs will lead this journey through scripture on Sunday mornings, December 5 through January 30, from 10-11:30 a.m. in Room 100. Participants will covenant to worship together at the 9 a.m. service.

**LECTIO DIVINA COVENANT GROUP:** Lectio, or devotional reading of scripture, is a time-honored way of allowing God to speak to you directly through the words of scripture. All of us have experienced reading the same scripture at different times in our lives and hearing it altogether differently. This is because God’s word is an Incarnate Word which meets us where we are.

In this covenant group, members will be encouraged to: Notice God’s action in their life. Pay attention to signs of God’s grace in life’s ordinary events. Respond to God’s invitations to be about the Spirit’s work of love and justice in all of life’s dimensions. This is done through the reading of scripture in which one focuses on a word or phrase in the Bible passage that speaks to their heart. By slowing down and following the four steps of lectio: reading, meditating, praying, and resting in God, we allow God to touch us in our depths.

This class runs December 5 through January 30, from 10-11:30 a.m. in Room 240. We will covenant to worship together at the 9 a.m. service.

THE ANNUAL  
Christmas Toy Store  
IS BACK!

Saturday, December 11, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Each December, the Mission Outreach Committee of FPC hosts a Christmas Toy Store. This annual outreach event provides parents and guardians the opportunity to "shop" with dignity through a donation-provided store of new children's toys and books for a small fee per child. The store benefits people connected to FPC ministries through Community Crossroads. Each year, over 300 children are served! Here's how you can help:

**SHOP!** Tables are set up outside the Great Hall and in the Narthex to collect new toys and books for children 10 and younger. (Maximum \$40 per toy.) Please bring your toys to the church by Sunday, December 5.

**GIVE!** You may give check donations (payable to First Presbyterian Church with Christmas Toy store in the memo line) by Sunday, December 5. Other church members who love to shop can purchase gifts to stock the store.

**VOLUNTEER!** Consider volunteering to help set up the store on Friday, December 10 and/or at the store on Saturday, December 11. Sign-up sheets are available on the tables outside the worship spaces, or contact the church office (817.335.1231).

ORDER POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS  
In Honor and Memory of Loved Ones

The FPC Worship & Music Committee will be placing live poinsettia plants in the worship spaces from December 12-26. You may purchase a plant in honor or memory of loved ones using the form below and turning it in to Celeste in the church office by Monday, December 6, with a check made out to First Presbyterian Church and "Poinsettias" marked in the memo line. Cost is \$25 per plant. Plants may be taken home after worship on December 26. Plants not picked up will be delivered to homebound members.

Given in ☐ honor or ☐ memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Advent and Christmas

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

The month of December is full of opportunities for connection, celebration, and worship at First Presbyterian Church. From once-a-year special services, which are part of your family traditions, to new and fun fellowship events with church friends, there's something for everyone. But don't let this full calendar add to the season easily overwhelmed with to-do's and checklists. Let FPC be a place for respite, reflection, and renewal this season. A time to remember the familiar yet powerful story of God's love for us in the gift of Jesus' birth. We can't wait to celebrate with you!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<b>1</b> Midday Prayer Service, 12 p.m. Organ Concert, 12:30 p.m. WOW (Worship on Wednesdays) Advent Worship, 5:30 p.m.	2	3	4
<b>5</b> 2nd Sunday of Advent Morning Worship at 8, 9, and 11 a.m. Covid-19 Vaccine Clinic, 9:30 a.m. All Church Brunch, 12 p.m.	6	7	<b>8</b> Midday Prayer Service, 12 p.m. Organ Concert, 12:30 p.m. WOW (Worship on Wednesdays) Advent Worship, 5:30 p.m.	9	10	<b>11</b> Christmas Toy Store, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
<b>12</b> 3rd Sunday of Advent Musical sermon at 9 and 11 a.m. Worship (No 8 a.m. Worship) Youth Choir & Bells at James L. West Center, 3:30 p.m. Follow the Star Live Nativity, 5:30 p.m.	13	<b>14</b> Presbyterian Women Celebration of Christmas, 10:30 a.m.	<b>15</b> Midday Prayer Service, 12 p.m. Organ Concert, 12:30 p.m. WOW (Worship on Wednesdays) Advent Worship, 5:30 p.m.	16	17	<b>18</b> Penn Street Arts Concert Series presents Fort Worth Opera Christmas Concert, 3 p.m.
<b>19</b> 4th Sunday of Advent Morning Worship at 8, 9, and 11 a.m. Children's Storytime & Breakfast at 10 a.m. Grades 4-5 Christmas Party, 12:15 p.m. Wholeness & Healing Service, 6:30 p.m.	<b>20</b> Christmas Lovefeast with Circles of Christ 6:30 p.m.	<b>21</b> Young Adult Christmas Light Driving Tour, 6 p.m.	<b>22</b> Midday Prayer Service, 12 p.m. Organ Concert, 12:30 p.m. No WOW (Worship on Wednesdays)	23	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve Brunch at Community Crossroads, 10:30 a.m. Christmas Eve Worship: 12 noon, 5 p.m., 7 p.m., 9 p.m.	<b>25</b> Merry Christmas!
<b>26</b> Morning Worship at 8, 9, and 11 a.m.	<b>27</b> Church Offices, Early Education Center, and Community Crossroads Outreach Center Closed	<b>28</b> Church Offices, Early Education Center, and Community Crossroads Outreach Center Closed	29	30	31	



# CHRISTMAS



## STOCKING PROJECT

FPC invites you to make (or purchase) and fill Christmas stockings for distribution to our neighbors at Community Crossroads during Christmas Eve Brunch on December 24.

The stockings need to be 19 inches long, storebought or homemade, and filled. Suggested items: candy canes or candy disks (Life Savers or cinnamon disks), chocolate Santa or Santa cookie, a deck of cards or travel size game, pair of gloves, hand and/or feet warmers, lip balm, comb or brush, compact mirror, sunscreen, sunglasses, pens/pencils, small notebooks, stationery, lotion, and a Christmas card from your household (no last names or addresses, please). You may purchase additional or different items to fill the stockings - use your imagination!

Stockings will be collected on Sundays, December 12 and 19, or may be dropped off in the church office during the week of December 13-17. Questions? Contact Denece Allen (dallen@fpcfww.org or 817.335.1231).

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S

## *Celebration of Christmas*

Tuesday, December 14

Worship at 11 a.m.

in the Sanctuary

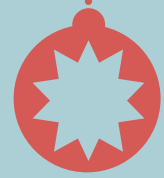
Lunch at 12 p.m.

in the Great Hall

Get more details

and RSVP at

[FPCFW.ORG/PW](http://FPCFW.ORG/PW)



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WILL HOST A

# COVID-19 VACCINE CLINIC

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5  
9:30 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.  
IN THE FPC GYM

We will offer first and second doses of Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccines, and booster shots. Everyone 5 years of age and older is now eligible for vaccination. If you have been fully vaccinated, you may be eligible for a booster.

Please bring ID (for children, a vaccine record with their birthdate or a birth certificate) and your vaccination card (if you have one). Pre-registration is not required.



Voter registration will also be available.

This clinic is sponsored by Tarrant County and open to the community.





# RECENTLY AT FIRST PRES...

From a Shuttle Ministry breakfast at a local restaurant, a Saturday morning Wellness Walk/Run, a Grace Presbytery hybrid gathering at FPC, Early Education Center "Touch the Truck" with Fort Worth Fire and Police Departments, a PW and Men's Ministry Christmas project, and a Children's Ministry Gratitude gathering, pictured here are some recent FPC happenings. If you have photos of an FPC event or gathering that you'd like to see included here, send them to Pam Burkholder, Communications Coordinator, at [pamb@fpcfw.org](mailto:pamb@fpcfw.org).





# JOYS & CONCERNS

Following are the joys and concerns shared as of November 17, 2021.  
To respect the privacy of those listed, names are included only when the individuals grant permission. Are you in the hospital? Let us know by contacting Parish Visitors Jennifer Pettey or Jennifer Regen in the church office. Let us keep the following persons in our thoughts and prayers this week...

## Our loving sympathy to...

**Denise and Paul Conner** on the death of her father, Wayne Long, on October 6, in Georgetown, Texas. Other surviving FPC family are **Ashli and Brandon Smick** and their children Everett, Graham, and Finley.

Friends and family of **Phyllis Wright**, who died October 6.

Friends and family of **Charles Brooks**, who died October 22. FPC survivors include his wife, **Martha Brooks**.

Friends and family of **Janet Whitesell**, who died November 7. Surviving FPC family are **Ann and Joe Hyun**.

**Julie and Rob Watson** on the death of her mother, Mervin Morris, on November 10.

## Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

**Mike Bailey, Bill Holmes, Susie Kuipers, Paula Robertson, Janet Ragsdale, Bill Gordon, and Mike Millar**, who are recovering from surgery or injury.

**Betty Dunham, Lynn Montgomery, Marilyn Love, Paul Campbell, Catherine Elkins, Glynda Coffey, Sarah Graham, Jim Goble, Jerry Brownlee, Janelle Eklund, Frank Stewart, Karl Travis, Emma Coley, and Frances Blake**, who are dealing with illness or undergoing treatment.

## Our caring prayers for extended family include...

Carolyn Brewer (sister of **Liz Barber**), Jo Gordon (daughter-in-law of **Pat and Bill Gordon**), Travis Gordon (son of **Pat and Bill Gordon**), Sue Quinn (mother of **Jaci Travis**), Tahji Hoffman (great niece of **Rachele Williams**), Ross Gordon (son of **Pat and Bill Gordon**), David Sloan (father-in-law of **Murray Hilyard**), Cora McCoy (mother-in-law of **Lesley McCoy**), Paula Perkins (sister of **Susie Kuipers**), Audrey Hart (great-granddaughter of **Bob and Jane Trask**), Ann Welch (sister of **Andrea Frankenfield**), Mike Bryan (son-in-law of **Mary Alice Dobesh**), Nancy Hatfield (mother of **Sarah Haddock**), Lynn Prater (daughter of **Harlene Satterfield**); Bill Neil (brother of **Marilyn Love**), John DeMore (son-in-law of **June Sprott**), Kathy Kline (**Maxine Kruse's** daughter), and Susan Chenault.

Prayers for peace in our world and for the safety of **Lt. Rolf Tilley** (son of **Katie and Jaret Tilley** and the grandson of **Janelle Eklund**), who is serving in the US Air Force in Japan. Prayers for the safety of Pape Russell (grandson of **Barbara Russell**), who is serving in the US Navy. Prayers for the safety of **Thomas Shelby** (son of **Ellen Buck** and the grandson of **Vance and Donna Laminack**), who is serving in the US Navy in Japan. Prayers for the safety of **Diego A. Saldivar** (son of **Becky and Renee Saldivar**), who is serving in the US Navy. Prayers for the safety of Cpt. Andrew Reece (son of **Ralph and Barbara Reece**), who is serving in the US Army in Qatar. Prayers for the safety of Nathan Gunter (nephew of **Russell and Vivian Norment**), who is stationed in Korea. Prayers for the safety of Cullen Cline (grandson of **Bill and Glinda King**) who is serving in the US Navy.

Prayers for those affected by the coronavirus pandemic including medical professionals and healthcare providers.

Prayers for Cindy Corell, our mission co-worker in Haiti. We pray also for those affected by disasters and political turmoil.



Beginning Sunday, January 23, First Presbyterian Church is offering a six-week in person Grief Support Group. Led by the Reverend Rachel Rigdon, this group offers a supportive and encouraging space in which to experience God's presence, comfort, and strength. We will be following the study guide in *Getting Grief Right: Finding Your Story of Love in the Sorrow of Loss*, written by Dr. Patrick O'Malley and Tim Madigan.

Rachel works as a chaplain at Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth. Rachel is an ordained United Methodist Deacon and Board Certified Chaplain. Rachel earned her M.Div. degree at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. She has over five years of experience working with children and adults as Chaplain and pastoral caregiver in multi-faith settings. Rachel is passionate about grief support for all ages and believes in the importance and sacredness of our own stories.

The Group will meet from 3:30-5 p.m. in Room 100. The six sessions (January 23 - February 27) are free and open to members and friends of First Presbyterian and the community. Even if you have been involved in a previous Grief Group, you are invited to attend. To register, visit [fpcfw.org/careandsupport](http://fpcfw.org/careandsupport) or contact Celeste in the church office (817.335.1231, ext. 261 or [cfalter@fpcfw.org](mailto:cfalter@fpcfw.org)).

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!



**Cheryl Cason** joined First Presbyterian Church on Sunday, October 31, by reaffirmation of faith. Cheryl has been visiting FPC and participating in Young Adult activities for several months. She is a high school teacher in Mansfield ISD.



**Jessica and Matt Nikiel** joined FPC on Sunday, October 31, by transfer of membership from First Presbyterian Church of Clarksville, TN. Their children are Ben, 7, Caroline, 5, and George, 1-1/2. Matt works for Lockheed Martin and is in the National Guard.



**Adrina Thompson** joined First Presbyterian Church on Sunday, November 7 by Reaffirmation of Faith. Adrina has been faithfully attending worship and the Boomers-Journeys church school class for several weeks. Please take a moment to welcome her on Sunday morning.



First Presbyterian Church  
1000 Penn Street  
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PERIODICALS  
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[WWW.FPCFW.ORG](http://WWW.FPCFW.ORG)

# THE penn street LETTER



## DECEMBER CALENDAR

**December 5, 12, 19, 10 a.m.:**  
**Young Adult Church School**  
*First Pres Room 234*

**December 7, 6-8 p.m.:**  
**Young Adult Hosted Choice Pantry**  
*Community Crossroads*

**December 14, 7 p.m.:**  
**Young Adult Study & Discussion**  
*Central Market*

**December 21, 6-8 p.m.:**  
**Young Adult Social Gathering**  
*Christmas Light Driving Tour*

**December 26: No Church School**

**December 28: No Study &  
Discussion**

[FPCFW.ORG/YOUNGADULTS](http://FPCFW.ORG/YOUNGADULTS)

## Christmas Lovefeast

**Monday, December 20**  
**6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Great Hall**

Join Circles of Christ for an evening of  
dinner, music, praise, and fellowship  
in the Moravian tradition!

The Moravian denomination introduced  
the service of a "Lovefeast" in 1727, a  
simple meal with song and prayer, to  
encourage Christian fellowship and love.



This event is free,  
but RSVPs are requested.  
Visit [fpcfw.org/circlesofchrist](http://fpcfw.org/circlesofchrist) to RSVP.

