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THE penn street LETTER

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First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

DECEMBER 2022 | Volume 22, Number 12

Advent and Christmas AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MIDDAY PRAYER SERVICES

*Wednesdays, November 30, December 7, 14, and 21,
12 noon 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.

ADVENT MIDDAY ORGAN CONCERTS

*Wednesdays, November 30, December 7, 14, and 21,
12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary,*

These concerts will be held immediately following the Noon Advent service in the Sanctuary. Featured guest organists are Yuri McCoy, organist at South Main Baptist Church of Houston, Texas, on November 30; Margaret Harper, Associate Director of Music and Organist at Saint Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Dallas, Texas, on December 7; Dalaie Choi, Music Director/Organist, Concordia Lutheran Church, Wilmington, Delaware, on December 14; and Grant Wareham, Associate Organist and Choirmaster of St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Dallas, Texas on December 21.

ADVENT LABYRINTH WALK

Sunday, December 4, 6 p.m. in the Memorial Garden

You are invited to a group labyrinth walk this Advent as a way of preparing for and reflecting on Christ's coming into the darkness of our world. We will gather on Sunday, December 4, at 6 p.m. in the FPC Memorial Garden. On this walk, each of us becomes a pilgrim journeying to the center as the light fades to darkness. As the sun sets, and we rely on the candle lit path, we

remember and rejoice in the light sent that cannot be overcome by darkness. In case of inclement weather, the walk will be held in the Parlor.

FOLLOW THE STAR LIVE NATIVITY

Sunday, December 11, 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).

SERVICE OF WHOLENESS & HEALING

Sunday, December 18, 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 BRUNCH AT COMMUNITY CROSSROADS

Saturday, December 24, 9:30 a.m.

You're invited to a festive holiday brunch at Community Crossroads with your church and Crossroads families! We'll celebrate together at 9:30 a.m. with brunch, seasonal music, and a visit from a big man in a red suit, then head to FPC by bus to attend the Noon Christmas Eve worship service together. There is no charge for brunch or the bus ride, but RSVPs are requested. RSVP at fpcfw.org/crossroads.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Saturday, December 24

Noon - Service of lessons and carols (Sanctuary)
5 p.m. - Service for families with children (Great Hall)
7 p.m. - Service with candlelight (Sanctuary)
9 p.m. - Service with communion & candlelight (Sanctuary)

Childcare provided at 7 p.m. The 7 p.m. service will also be livestreamed at fpcfw.org/livestream

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP

Sunday, December 25

10 a.m. - Worship in the Sanctuary
A relaxed, "come as you are" service celebrating God with us. Show off that favorite Christmas sweater!

A pre-recorded Christmas worship message will also be available at fpcfw.org/livestream at 11 a.m.

PENNSt Arts

Fort Worth Opera

Winter Concert

Saturday, December 17, 2022 at 2 p.m.

This free community concert in the Sanctuary will feature Christmas songs, timeless carols, holiday favorites, opera classics, and more performed by Fort Worth Opera's Resident and Studio Artists.

Christmas Lovefeast

**Tuesday, 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!



FPCFW.ORG/CIRCLESOFCHRIST



PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

Advent is a complex season. We do it a disservice when we reduce it down to simply a waiting period, yet it is an injustice to not enter the season without some sort of anticipation. It is crying out for our Immanuel to appear knowing that he already has. It is a yearning for the fulfillment of all things that we know is not necessarily scheduled for December 25th anyways. Advent is complex.

I was recently reminded of a prayer from one of my professors at Columbia Theological Seminary. Walter Brueggemann is a bible scholar and a pastor at heart. He was an old soul even when he was young boy (I've been told). And his prayers have a way of resonating with all those to take the time to truly pray — not just read — with him. The prayer is called “An Advent Prayer” and it is printed below.

So, I invite you into the complexity of this season. I invite you to enter into prayer with me over the coming weeks using these words and your own. And I invite you to dwell in both the already and not yet as we watch the dark blue skies glimmer with that expectant hope.

Grace and Peace,

Brian

ADVENT PRAYER by Walter Brueggemann
from his book *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth*

*In our secret yearnings
we wait for your coming,
and in our grinding despair
we doubt that you will.
And in this privileged place
we are surrounded by witnesses who yearn more than do we
and by those who despair more deeply than do we.
Look upon your church and its pastors
in this season of hope
which runs so quickly to fatigue
and in this season of yearning
which becomes so easily quarrelsome.
Give us the grace and the impatience
to wait for your coming to the bottom of our toes,
to the edges of our fingertips.
We do not want our several worlds to end.
Come in your power
and come in your weakness
in any case
and make all things new.
Amen.*

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the **JANUARY** issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, DECEMBER 14**. 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@fpcfw.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

PUBLISHER INFO

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JOYS & CONCERNS

Following are the joys and concerns as of November 17, 2022. To respect the privacy of those listed, names are included only when the individuals grant permission. Are you in the hospital or dealing with an illness? Let us know by contacting Parish Visitors Jennifer Regen or Matt McGraw in the church office. Let us keep the following persons in our thoughts and prayers this week...

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Larry Kinard, Marye Drexler, Phyllis Tolles, Glenn Pense, Bill Sommers, Jody Buening, Janie Hart, Bob Parmelee, Velma James, Mike Bailey, Karl Kuipers, and Susie Kuipers, who are recovering from surgery or injury. We also pray for their caregivers.

Nancy Gedge-Carlson, Marilyn Love, Fred Wilson, Frances Blake, Phyllis Propes, Kevin Bryan, Irene Howard, Dean Holloman, Chuck Sullivan, Lucy Redrow (daughter of **Leigh Ann and Grant Redrow**), **Betty Dunham, Paul Campbell, Glynda Coffey, Jim Goble, Frank Stewart, and Karl Travis**, who are dealing with illness or undergoing treatment. We also pray for their caregivers.

Our caring prayers for extended family include...

Andy Hedrick (brother of **Patti Bradley**), **Jolie Paprskar-Mozingo** (daughter of **Joy Paprskar**), **Gary Drexler** (husband of **Marye Drexler**), **Kimberly Davis** (daughter of **Marye Drexler**), **Walter Williams** (husband of **Rachele Williams**), **Caleb James Baker** (great-grandson of **Betty Tillman**), **Terry James** (nephew of **Rachele Williams**), **Jo Gordon** (daughter-in-law of **Pat and Bill Gordon**), **Carolyn Brewer** (sister of **Liz Barber**), **Tahji Hoffman** (great niece of **Rachele Williams**), **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**), **Nancy Hatfield** (mother of **Sarah Haddock**), **Lynn Prater** (daughter of **Harlene Satterfield**); **Bill Neil** (brother of **Marilyn Love**), and **John DeMore** (son-in-law of **June Sprott**).

Prayers for peace in our world and for the safety of **Capt. 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 **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.

We pray for our mission coworkers: **Cindy Corell** in Haiti, **Jed and Jenny Koball** in Peru, **Cathy Chang** and **Juan Lopez** in the Philippines. We pray for our partner congregations:

Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist in Fort Worth and for the congregations of Buen Pastor, Resurrection, and Cidra Presbyterian Churches in Cuba.

Our congratulations and best wishes to...

Austin and Blitz Phillips on the birth of **Thomas Heyward** on June 17, 2022.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Please join the Evangelism Committee in welcoming these new members.



Paula Overton, who joined by transfer of membership on November 6. Paula is a retired legal assistant and has worshiped with us several times over the past few months.



Tamra Vanhoy, who joined by transfer of membership on October 30. Tamra is a long-time Presbyterian and has visited First Presbyterian several times recently.

RECENTLY AROUND FIRST PRES...

From a men's ministry gathering, a church picnic and blood drive, the annual Turkey Bowl youth vs adults flag football game (the adults captured the trophy after a close game!), a MOMS crafting night, and a visit from This Child Here (mission working with the vulnerable youth of Ukraine), 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, share them with Pam Burkholder at pamb@fpcfw.org.



Annual CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR THE BLIND December 1

The annual "Christmas Party for the Blind" is on Thursday, December 1 at 6 p.m. in the Great Hall. FPC has hosted this special event for our city's blind community for over 70 years! We need volunteers to drive guests to the party, so contact Becky (bquick@fpcfw.org) or Josh (josh@fpcfw.org) if you are willing to help. Youth are asked to meet at 5:30 p.m. to help set-up for the party, and we plan to end by 8 p.m.

THE ANNUAL Christmas Toy Store IS BACK!

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! Please consider taking a star from outside the Great Hall or the Narthex, and donating a toy or a check so we can buy a gift, or consider volunteering to help on Friday afternoon, December 9 for setup and/or Saturday, December 10 at the store. Sign-up sheets are on the tables in the Great Hall and Narthex. The experience of helping our neighbors from Community Crossroads shop for toys will definitely warm your heart. Let's make this a very special Christmas for many Community Crossroads families!

ROOM IN THE INN RETURNS THIS WINTER

Room in the Inn (RITI) is a coalition of member congregations that provide hospitality for up to 14 men experiencing homelessness in Fort Worth one night a week during the coldest and hottest months of the year. We provide delicious food, a safe place to sleep, and fellowship. The purpose of RITI is to build bridges of relationship, mutuality and respect between guests and hosts. It takes a team to offer this hospitality so please consider using your gifts as a disciple to extend a warm welcome to guests this winter (Mondays, December 5 through February 27). Learn more and volunteer at fpcfw.org/riti.

Fill a Stocking for Community Crossroads!



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 4, 11, and 18 or may be dropped off in the church office during the week of December 19-23. Questions? Contact MaLinda (817.921.3955 or mmorehead@fpcfw.org) or Becky (bquick@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231).



Inspiring Disciples... Engaging the World...

Presbyterians are part of a remarkable tradition. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s four church-wide Special Offerings help share Christ's love with millions of people around the world. First Presbyterian participates in all four special offerings throughout the year. This month, First Presbyterian participates in the Christmas Joy Offering.

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years. To learn more about the Christmas Joy offering, visit the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) website at: <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>

To participate in this special offering you can give online at www.fpcfw.org/give or by placing a check in the mail or offering plate made out to First Presbyterian Church with "Christmas Joy" in the memo line.



December

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS CALENDAR

Advent is full of opportunities for connection, celebration, and worship at First Presbyterian Church. We hope this will 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
27 November First Sunday of Advent Morning Worship at 8, 9, and 11 a.m. Youth Stocking Stuffing Party, 4:30 p.m.	28	29	30 Midday Prayer Service, 12 p.m. Organ Concert, 12:30 p.m. WOW (Worship on Wednesdays) Advent Worship, 5:30 p.m.	1 Presbyterian Women's Wreath-making event, 5:30 p.m. Christmas Party for the Blind, 6 p.m.	2	3 Circles of Christ "Take the Soul Train to Christmas" at Jubilee Theatre, 3 p.m.
4 Second Sunday of Advent Morning Worship at 8, 9, and 11 a.m. Grades 4-5 Christmas Party, 12:15 p.m. 6 p.m. Advent Candlelight Labyrinth Walk	5 Room in the Inn, 5 p.m.	6	7 Midday Prayer Service, 12 p.m. Organ Concert, 12:30 p.m. WOW (Worship on Wednesdays) Advent Worship, 5:30 p.m.	8	9 Young Adult Social Gathering, 7 p.m.	10 Christmas Toy Store, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
11 Third Sunday of Advent Morning Worship at 8, 9, and 11 a.m. All Church Brunch, 12 p.m. Follow the Star Live Nativity Walk & Dinner, 5:30 p.m.	12 Room in the Inn, 5 p.m.	13 Presbyterian Women's Celebration of Christmas, 10:30 a.m. EEC Christmas Concert, 6 p.m.	14 Midday Prayer Service, 12 p.m. Organ Concert, 12:30 p.m. WOW (Worship on Wednesdays) Advent Worship, 5:30 p.m.	15	16 Children, Youth, and Family Christmas Caroling, 5:45 p.m.	17 Penn Street Arts & Fort Worth Opera Winter Concert, 2 p.m.
18 Fourth Sunday of Advent Morning Worship at 8, 9, and 11 a.m. Children's Christmas Storytime & Breakfast, 10 a.m. Youth Christmas Parties, 4:30-7 p.m. Advent Taize Worship, 6:30 p.m.	19 EEC Christmas Spirit Week Room in the Inn, 5 p.m.	20 EEC Christmas Spirit Week Circles of Christ Lovefeast, 6:30 p.m.	21 EEC Christmas Spirit Week Midday Prayer Service, 12 p.m. Organ Concert, 12:30 p.m. WOW (Worship on Wednesdays) Advent Worship, 5:30 p.m. FPC Youth College Reunion, 5 p.m.	22 EEC Christmas Spirit Week	23 EEC Christmas Spirit Week Young Adult Christmas Light Bus Tour, 5:30 p.m.	24 Christmas Eve Brunch at Community Crossroads, 9:45 a.m. Service of Lessons & Carols, 12 p.m. Family Service, 5 p.m. Candlelight Service, 7 p.m. Communion & Candlelight Service, 9 p.m.
25 Merry Christmas! Christmas Day Worship, 10 a.m.	26 Church Offices, Community Crossroads Outreach Center, and Early Education Center Closed	27 Church Offices, Community Crossroads Outreach Center, and Early Education Center Closed	28 WOW (Worship on Wednesdays), 5:30 p.m.	29 Youth Wolf Creek Ski Trip	30 Youth Wolf Creek Ski Trip	31 Youth Wolf Creek Ski Trip