

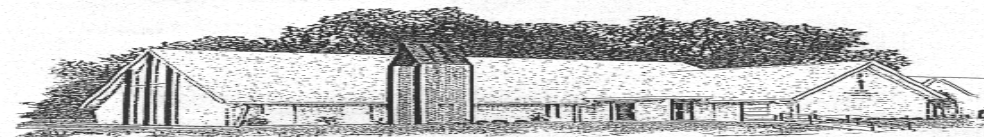
Joy to the World



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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HENDERSON, TEXAS 75653-0773

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December



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Joseph, son of David

This year, as the lectionary directs, we will spend the majority of our time in the Gospel according to Matthew. Both Matthew and Luke tell of the birth of Jesus, but the two versions have differences. Matthew describes a dream so convincing, that upon waking, Joseph followed the instructions of the angel in his dream, and agreed to “take Mary as his wife” in spite of the fact that her *delicate condition* would have allowed him to legally walk away and never have anything to do with her again.

The angel also told Joseph that the child would be a boy – when a child’s gender was always a surprise until the birth. And the angel told Joseph the child’s name.

Joseph – a man of God, a man of ethics, a man of his era, a man who had never had a wife before, but now had one who was already “with child” and he was told who, when, where, and how he would respond to this extraordinary situation. This was a strong man, who willingly followed the voice of unreason and took excellent care of his wife and family, without hesitation.

I wonder if we shouldn’t give Joseph more attention. Many of you know firsthand what it’s like to be told what to do, and when, and how. Sometimes you follow readily, sometimes you balk and wonder why it seems you don’t have the chance to choose.

So we salute Joseph – the man who raised our Lord. And we give thanks for his craftsmanship, shown day by day to the boy, and his patient education of the Scriptures, taught chapter by chapter to the boy, and his willingness to follow the Spirit of God to places unknown, through experiences unknown, for reasons unknown, simply because he was a faithful man of God.

Perhaps during this Advent season, as we await the birth of the Holy Child, we will remember some of what it was like to be Joseph, and to serve God without hesitation, without community backing, and always with an eye to what was the right thing to do.

May we always try to serve God like Joseph.

Candice

Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife, and knew her not until she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

- Matthew 1: 24-25

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION HAPPENINGS

The beginning of the church year is the Advent season. The four Sundays before Christmas are a time of waiting and anticipating the coming of Jesus Christ. The Andrews Class and the Seekers Class will be gathering in the Fellowship Hall beginning Sunday, Dec. 1 to spend this Advent time together to rediscover the meanings of this Holy Season. Our study book will be *Illuminating Advent* by Donald K. McKim. Each Sunday will focus on one of the themes of the Advent wreath—Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. They are familiar to us but they can surprise us with new insights each year. Each Sunday's lesson is a stand-alone lesson so if you have to miss one, you may pick right up the next Sunday. The study book will be provided.

An invitation from both classes is extended to each of you to join us at 9:45 each Sunday during Advent so that together we may enhance and deepen our faith during this Christmas time of anticipation of the arrival of *Immanuel—God with us*.

May you all experience a blessed Christmas season,
The Christian Education Team



The Fellowship Committee will be hosting our Annual Christmas Feast on Sunday December 15th following worship. The Fellowship Committee will be providing the meat . Please bring your favorite side dish or dessert.

**Merry Christmas,
The Fellowship Committee**



This month offers such a glorious time for us to raise our hearts and voices in celebration of our Lord Jesus Christ's birth. The music department has been busy preparing our special Lessons and Carols service to be presented on Sunday, December 15, at 11 am. This service will feature scripture readings, choral anthems, solos, and congregational hymns. Also, on December 24 at 5:30 pm, we will again celebrate with our Christmas Eve Feast. We hope you will join us in praising God through music during this beautiful season.

Mary Tidwell
Organist & Choir Director



Please keep these dear ones in your prayers:

Members of the Congregation

Bill and Carolyn Boren, Dorothy Box and family, Jack Clark, Helen Crim, Mark & Linda Davis, Jordan and Sunshine, Jane and Tolly Dill, Bob Hays, Joyce Huggins, Claudine Kennedy, Billie Manck, Neil, Mariella, and Jan Pennal, Alicia Rich, Patsy, Ginny and Tela Snelgrove

Connected Family

Connor Bradshaw – Porter's grandson, Brittany McLane – Schauwecker's granddaughter, Letty Tennison – Cindy Ratliff's mother, Colton Wallace – Cody Conway's cousin

Friends and Neighbors

Camilla Foppes, Myra Folmar – friend of Bert Lowe, Responders and workers in the PDA, The Staff and Leadership of Grace Presbytery

Those loved ones known only to God



Love Offering for the Staff

On Sunday, December 15th, we will remember those who work hard to keep this church and our worship services going all year long by giving to the "Staff Love Offering". Finance Committee Members will be in the congregation to receive the offerings.

Bill Stanley

Finance Committee Chair





Lynn Tieken and Kathy Porter represented FPC in the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Christmas drive by ringing the bells on Sat., Nov. 30. All local donations stay in our community to help the Salvation Army meet the physical, material, emotional, and spiritual needs of the area's most vulnerable. It is a drive in which a lot of small donations add up. Lynn and Kathy expressed "feeling blessed by the experience."

They encourage you all to drop a few coins in those red kettles outside of Walmart.

The Book Corner

Want a good and heartwarming, short novel to read this Christmas season?

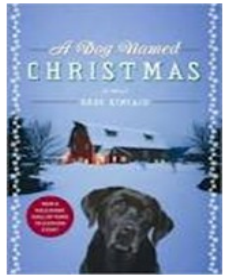
Your library has one for you—*A Dog Named Christmas* by Greg Kincaid. This story is one of a young man, his doubting father and a stray dog. Todd, a developmentally challenged young man, hears about a special program the local animal shelter is running for the holidays. In an effort to clear the shelter for the holidays when there is not enough staff available to care for all the animals, the town shelter is asking the public to "bring a dog home just for the holidays." After overcoming his father's objections, Todd brings a pooch home for the holidays and names him Christmas.

What follows from his small act of kindness will teach his family, and his community, about peace on earth and good will toward men and animals. This story is one of hope and love in the true spirit of Christmas, and one to read when you are overwhelmed by the demands of the holidays. And it is waiting for you at the FPC Library!

May the gifts we share this season be a reminder of God's precious gift to us.

May your Christmas be filled with His love,

The Christian Education Team



Worship Team Report

The Worship Team met Sunday, November 24, 2013 immediately following the worship service. Present were: Rev. Candice Klein, Mary Tidwell, Fonta Conway, Margaret Hillin and Jane Dill. We are anticipating the celebration of the birth of our Savior as the Advent season begins. A part of our visual celebration will be our traditional display of poinsettias in the place of worship. They will greet us at the worship service on December 1, the first Sunday in the Christian season of Advent. There will be sign-up sheet in the narthex for those who wish to give \$5.50 for each poinsettia plant in memory or in honor of someone. The first candle of the Advent Wreath will also be lighted during that service.

Our service of Lessons and Carols will be during worship on Sunday, December 15. There will be a fellowship meal following the service. Christmas Eve Love Feast will be at 5:30 p.m. December 24. Fonta Conway will coordinate the service and session members will serve as ushers. Session members are asked to arrive at 4:30 pm. so they can prepare to serve the sweet rolls and hot chocolate. Let us pray and work to have a blessed Advent and Christmas season.

We will sing Christmas Carols at the December 29 worship service.

Jane Dill
Team Leader

OUTREACH 2013 COMES TO AN END WTH MORE GIVING

Pat yourselves on the back for a job well done in putting on a very successful October neighborhood party. And, while you are at it, be thankful for the many we were able to provide food for, through our generous Thanksgiving food drive.

Our Christmas projects are ongoing to date and involve gifting Son Shine Lighthouse with paper goods and providing Christmas gifts to our less fortunate neighbors at Rusk State Hospital through our angel tree project.

Your outreach team would like to encourage you to participate in these projects. We ask a lot from you through the year, and next year will be no different, afterall, we have been given the best gift of all in Jesus Christ. So let us respond to this, the greatest gift of all, by giving.

Merry Christmas,
Jan Pennal, chair



Session Actions

Nov. 5, 2013

- Noted that the Financial Audit of 2012 had been duly completed
- Heard a report from Finance about a shortfall in pledges as of Nov. 5
- Updated the Operations Manual
- Heard a report on the Presbyterians for Earth Care Conference from Rev. Klein and Kathy Porter
- Discussed feedback for hall painting day, the new music director’s first month, and the Neighborhood Party
- Moved that John Tieken address the congregation at a future congregational luncheon to request monetary support, donations, memorials, and gifts in honor of persons or families to fund or at least partly fund the sanctuary renovations.
- Discussed ways to acknowledge donations for sanctuary renovations Set date of examination of incoming elders for Dec. 3



DID YOU KNOW?

One of the most effective ways of saving energy is by using compact fluorescent light bulbs or CFL bulbs because they generate the same intensity of light but consume three times less power when compared to regular bulbs.



Soon, we will be gathering with our family and friends to celebrate the birth of Christ. Most of us will give and receive gifts, some of which, I venture to say, we probably don't need or want. One of the PDA folks that I worked with in the Austin area a few weeks ago explained that her family put together the dollars that they would have spent on Christmas gifts. Each year, a different member decided which charitable cause the money would be applied to. With the many people out there hurting from the effects of disasters, both natural and manmade, what wonderful gift this could be!

As chair of the Building Team, I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your patience, your physical labors, your dollars and your support in the past year in the ongoing building upgrades. I am pleased with the work we have accomplished together and it is my prayer that we continue. I have enclosed a picture of gratitude of just one of the families in the Austin area flood. May I wish you all a blessed and safe Christmas!

Building and Grounds Team Leader,
John Tieken



Proposed Budget up for Adoption by Session

The Finance Committee would like to thank the congregation members who made a financial commitment to First Presbyterian Church for the 2014 budget year and for all the budget years before today. Without each and all's generosity and prayerful giving we would not have been successful. Thank You

On Tuesday 12/3/2013 The Finance Committee will present the proposed budget for 2014 to the Session for their consideration. The proposed budget that will be presented is unchanged from the budget presented to the congregation in October and early November.

Although down \$2,600 from the 2013 budget, the proposed budget manages the needs of the Church while increasing funds to the committees so that they can continue the mission of our church. The total budget for 2014 is \$162,600 and is broken down by committee below.

Personnel	113,730
Building & Grounds	9,950
Utilities	8,700
Worship	3,370
Fellowship	1,200
Outreach	3,125
Christian Education	2,500
Administration	5,275
Session	2,000
Member Care	100
Mission	9,750
Stewardship & Finance	2,900

94% of the Income comes from Pledges or plate offerings. You are a congregation of generous people. May you give generously to the church's ministry and mission this year. As you give, may you know the joy of giving and the satisfaction of knowing what an important presence this church is in the world and in this community.

Bill Stanley
Finance Chair



DECEMBER



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Jack Clark 	2 Bill Boren 6:30 Hanging of the Green FUMC	3 6:30 Session Meeting	4	5	6	7
8 	9	10 Women's Lunch at Jane Fahle's house	11	12	13	14
15  Lessons & Carols Christmas Lunch	16	17	18	19 Syble DeLoach	20	21
22 	23	24  Church Offices Closed 5:30 Christmas Eve Feast	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i> Church Offices Closed	26	27	28
29 Christmas Carol Sing	30	31 Carol Scoggins	1  Church Offices Closed	2	3	4