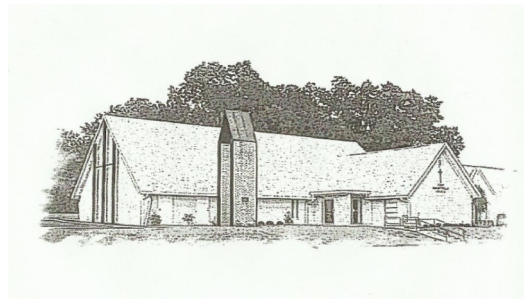




**First  
Presbyterian  
Church**  
Henderson, Texas



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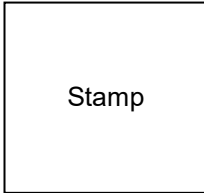
[www.fpchendersontx.org](http://www.fpchendersontx.org)



*“Serving God,  
Honoring Creation,  
Embracing Differences”*



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**P. O. BOX 773**  
**HENDERSON, TEXAS 75653-0773**



# Connections

**First Presbyterian Church**  
Henderson, Texas

December 2023 Vol. 55:12

*Advent: In Light and Darkness*

This Advent season we are embarking on a Great ADVENTure. Worship and Christian Education (CE) have joined forces for a united theme. Using liturgical material from Illustrated Ministry and Barbara Brown Taylor’s book *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, we will explore how themes of light and dark are at play in the birth narrative in the gospels. Our weekly advent devotional for use at home, *In Light and Darkness*, is also the work of Illustrated Ministry. The hope is this united theme will guide our Advent preparations in a way that is coherent and enlightening.

Light and dark are often misunderstood as competing forces, but they are interconnected and dependent upon one another. Light cannot exist without dark. During the day, we cannot see the stars, but in the dark of night, the light of the stars twinkle and dance.

In John’s Gospel, there is no birth narrative. Instead, John begins at the beginning of all things: “In the beginning was the Word... He was in the beginning with God.” (John 1:1-2) Then John calls Christ the light, “in him [Christ] was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” (v4-5) At creation darkness makes room for the light, and when the Light comes into the world as Emmanuel, God is with us, the darkness, again, makes room.

As we move beyond the concept of opposites, we can begin to see how other “opposites” like church/world, spirit/flesh, and sacred/profane are actually pairs that function in balance. May we welcome this unique opportunity to walk in the dark and trust that the light of Christ will lead us to a new dawn.

*Rev Michele*

## Council Actions

November 16, 2023

- ◇ Prayed together and shared joys and concerns
- ◇ Examined a Ruling Elder for service on the Session
- ◇ Adopted a budget
- ◇ Did yearly review of employees and recommended raises
- ◇ Noted upcoming Congregational Meeting and catered lunch
- ◇ Noted two items of business to be done by end of year



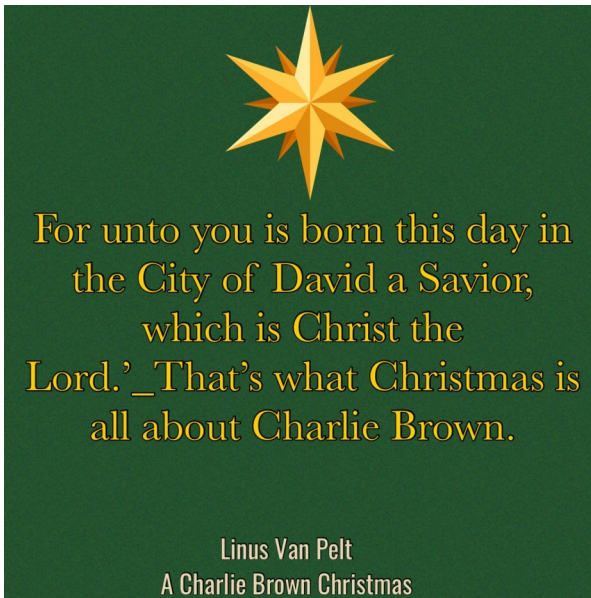
Weekly the **Communication Team** posts the church service bulletin to the website, assists with streaming worship services, posts songs used in the worship to licensing companies as required by copyright laws, and assists as needed with newspaper columns. Also, we have continued to keep the church website updated and the Facebook page active with current postings.

Monthly we collect newsletter submissions, conduct multiple proofreads of the newsletter draft, and sign off on the newsletter for publication and distribution. Additionally, we are exploring additional avenues to enhance communication about upcoming church activities and events. We submitted our 2023 committee activities and 2024 committee goals which were included in the 2023 End of the Year Report at the November 17th, Stewardship Luncheon and Congregational Meeting.

The Communications Committee meets informally multiple times per month doing what we do best – “communicating” - by telephone, text, face-to-face, and e-mail.

We remain resolute, excited, devoted, and honored to serve the congregation.

Team Members are Liz -Chair, Claudia - 2nd Chair, Weldon, Kathy, and Rev. Michele



## THE STAFF

Pastor – Rev Michele Goff  
[ReverendGoff@gmail.com](mailto:ReverendGoff@gmail.com)

Administrative Assistant – Debbi Ricci  
[hendersonfirstpres@gmail.com](mailto:hendersonfirstpres@gmail.com)

## THE SESSION

Liz Cross  
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Kathy Porter - Clerk of Session  
903-646-0162  
[kathyporter301@gmail.com](mailto:kathyporter301@gmail.com)

Music and Worship Arts Facilitator—Joshua Allen

## FINANCE AT A GLANCE

	IN	OUT	BALANCE
October 2023:			
	\$9,519	\$18,323	-\$8,804
September 2023:			
	\$8,469	\$86,743**	-\$78,274
Year to Date:			
	\$181,192*	\$206,537**	-\$25,345

\* Includes \$75,117.80 & \$10,796.30 insurance receipts for roof damage.

\*\*Includes payment of \$72,500 for new roof.





November 18th,  
2023

*Advent and showtunes come together this December, as we journey with the enchanting melodies of Broadway. In Light and Darkness, we will find the echoes of God's love in every note.*

*Pippin     Rent     Kimberly Akimbo*  
*Annie     Beauty and the Beast*  
*Next to Normal     Children of Eden*  
*, Godspell     Baby*



# The Great Adventure

*Advent & Christmas  
Worship Schedule*

**December 3 ~ 11AM**  
*First Sunday of Advent  
Communion Service*

**December 17 ~ 11AM**  
*The Great Adventure:  
An Advent Cantata*

**December 10 ~ 11AM**  
*Second Sunday of Advent  
Worship Service*

**December 24 5:30 PM**  
*(No morning worship service)  
Christmas Eve Candlelight  
Worship Service*

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays



December is a busy time at home and church -- lots of activity and busy preparation. But in all of the hustle and bustle, remember to take time to be in the moment.

Take time to listen to the sounds of the season, to drive around and look at Christmas lights, to attend a church service and a music or theatre event.

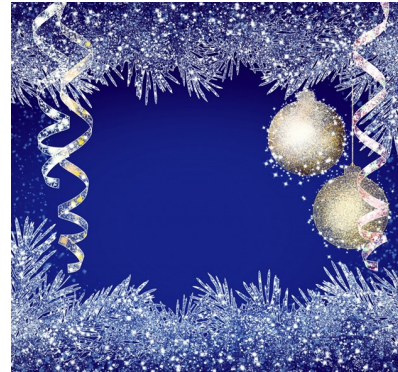
**Merry Christmas from the Building & Grounds Team**

*The Fellowship Team wishes you all a very Merry Christmas!*

*We have been blessed with several group gatherings this past year and will look forward to more in the New Year.*

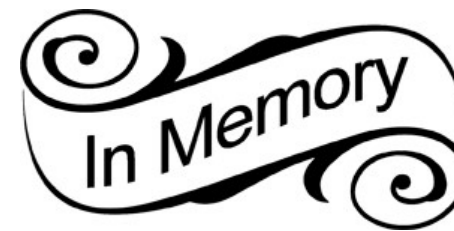
*We would like to invite you to join us for the Christmas Luncheon on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> after service. This will be special time shared together. It will also be when we share our "Love Offering" with the church team - Rev. Michele, Debbi and Joshua.*

*May the season sparkle -- Happy Holidays!*



## Stewardship Luncheon

November 19



Memorial Gifts have been received in Memory

of  
**Syble DeLoach**  
and  
**June Lowe**

*"Both in life and in death, we belong to God."*

*~Romans 14:8*

## Reaching Out to Each of You this Holiday Season



**Outreach** is alive and well at FPC. Our donations to the **HIM Thanksgiving Basket Drive** raised \$580 that went to purchase holiday foods for the HIM neighbors. What a special gift to help those in our community that might not otherwise be able to have a Thanksgiving meal together. Our church was one of the founding churches of HIM and we continue our involvement all these years later. In addition to our quarterly

financial support and monthly food donations, Kathy volunteers at HIM each Wednesday to help process the received donations and Kathy and Claudia both serve on the HIM Board. Thank you to each and every one of you for participating in this important moment of grace for others.

To help our neighborhood **Adopt-A-Block** friends get in the spirit of Christmas, we took Christmas treasurers and blessings around to the neighbors on November 27<sup>th</sup>. We also continue our participation as the only volunteers for **Meals on Wheels** each Friday during the year.

Throughout the month of December, the **Joy Gift**, a special offering of PCUSA, will be collected and will culminate at Christmas. This special offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers many who need just a little extra assistance. This offering also helps develop future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges.

We end our year as we started and continued throughout 2023 -- giving to our church, our community and the world with gifts of funds, time, talent and energy. Thank you all for being a part!

Merry Christmas,

Lynn, Mary, Jimmy, Louise, Claudia, Kathy, John, Kelly & Rev. Michele

Merry Christmas. May your holidays be filled with the love of family, the presence of friends, and the remembrance of the true reason for the season!

Sunday study for Advent will be based on the book, **Learning to Walk in the Dark** by Barbara Brown Taylor. Rev. Michele selected this study and this theme for the Advent season as we will focus on Light and Dark, so this book should be very helpful in our discussions. Devotional material and prayers for Advent will be available to our homebound and others who want them.

We continue to encourage everyone to check out our church library. New books have been added; some donated; some from previous studies.

This is a very special time of year. We hope everyone will feel Christ's presence with them.

### Christian Education Team

Lynn, Jimmy, Kathy, Liz, Claudia & Rev. Michele



Special  
Thank you  
to the  
Helpers/  
Decorators  
for  
Mary Ann's  
Centennial  
Celebration

November 18,  
2023

(Kathy, Lsha, Lynn)

December 24, 2023  
5:30 pm  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service



(no morning worship service)

# December 2023



## Duty Elders for December:

3-Kathy  
 10-Claudia  
 17, 24, 31-Steve & Mary

## Liturgists for December:

3 - Jimmy  
 10 -John H.  
 17 -Stefen  
 24-Steve  
 31 - Carol

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Meals on Wheels	2
<b>3</b> First Sunday of Advent 9:45 Sunday School-Begin Study, "Learning to Walk in the Dark " 11:00 Worship/Communion <b>Home Communion</b>	4	5	6	7	8 Meals on Wheels	9
<b>10</b> Second Sunday of Advent 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Worship <b>Christmas Luncheon</b>	11	12	13	14	15 Meals on Wheels	16
<b>17</b> Third Sunday of Advent 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 The Great ADVENTure an Advent Cantata	<b>18</b> 6:00 Session Meeting via ZOOM	<b>19</b> Connections Deadline for January	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 2:30 Rusk County L.E.A.N. Coalition Meeting	<b>22</b> Meals on Wheels	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> Fourth Sunday of Advent 5:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service	<b>25</b> Christmas Day 	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Meals on Wheels	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> New Year's Eve 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee Fellowship 11:00 Worship						



## December Birthdays:

2—Bill  
 6—Scott  
 8—James  
 30—Doris  
 31—Carol