



# THE GOOD NEWS

*The Good News* is published ten times a year by the  
First Presbyterian Church of Commerce, Texas.

**October 2014**

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## Worship with us!

"A Christian Community  
of Faith"


**9:45 a.m. Sunday School  
for all ages**

**10:50 a.m.**

**Sunday Worship**

**Rev. Krista Rasco – Pastor**


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**Roger McKenzie – Church Secretary**

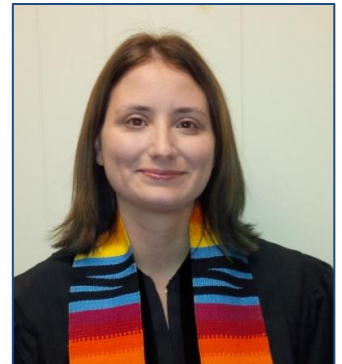
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## A Message From the Pastor

*A program called Communities in Schools (C.I.S.) came to my attention, as have several other nice things to know about this wonderful little town of Commerce, Texas, through a recent meeting with the Commerce Community Action Program (known as C-CAP). I wanted to share with you what I learned about Communities in Schools.*



*You may actually know about the program, or maybe even used to volunteer with them. I am going to tell you about it just in case you did not know about C.I.S., forgot about them, or perhaps did not realize they are still here located at AC Williams and serving the Commerce Independent School District (CISD).*

*The regional director of C.I.S., Shellie Thomas, was there to share information about the general area that she serves, as well as Nancy Laws, who is the C.I.S. Case Manager for CISD. Communities in Schools is a program on interventions that includes services for around 140 students. These students are provided with face to face contacts and other social service needs including mentoring, tutoring, and reading and dropout prevention programs. C.I.S. relies on adult volunteers for the face to face contact, mentoring, and to give the students they serve a responsible adult role model to look to and to form relationships with.*

*I learned that, years ago, the program had several case managers and a higher number of adult mentors/volunteers which allowed them to serve many more kids than they can reach currently. They need more volunteers! And to be honest, my first thought was that I did not have a lot of free time (or alone time) to spend after school with one of these kids. But I do have time before 5 p.m., and they told us that how you spend time with the children is flexible. You can go have lunch in the cafeteria with a student once a week, or volunteer a few hours helping a teacher in his/her classroom, for example. Of course, your main focus would be the students specifically in this program, but you would be able to assist all the students in the classroom.*

*There are actually quite a few options. The main goal is to spend one on one time with a student to let them know that they matter enough that you would take even an hour out of your week just for them.*

*Continued on page 6*



**And who said  
watching a Tiger  
football game  
couldn't be a  
religious  
experience?**

We couldn't agree more about this beautiful picture submitted by Tina Fletcher. We thought it might put you in a good mood to start off this newsletter.

## Presbyterian Women News

Ladies, please mark Oct. 25 on your calendars. That Saturday is the Grace Presbytery PW Fall Gathering at First Presbyterian Church of Athens.

There will be a business meeting/gathering where Sherry Hardwick will be the keynote speaker. She will share highlights and details of her recent mission trip to the Appalachian area. The Rev. Dr. Julie Adkins, one of our former interim ministers, is in charge of the Communion service in the afternoon.

The offering will be evenly divided between Global Exchange and "The Farm", a facility for battered/displaced women and children. Carpool plans for this event will be finalized later this month.

At September's PW Circle meeting, a fascinating slide show was put on by **Tina Fletcher**. She focused on part of the recent Selvaggi family trip to Italy—a side trip exploring some of the Greek islands.

The meeting also included installation



of PW Circle officers by Rev. Krista Rasco.



*The new slate of PW Circle officers, pictured above from left to right, includes Nancy McFarland, Missions Chair; Bettina Zvanut (Co-Historian, along with Beverly Housewright who is not pictured); Martha Clevenger, Secretary; Nila McQuary, Circle Chair; Helon Razniak, Co-Moderator; Toni Deaton, Moderator; and Brenda Estes, Treasurer.*

*At left, Tina Fletcher took Circle members on a Greek island tour. At right, Nancy McFarland and Mona Towne give Nancy Green (center) a welcome to the Circle Meeting.*





## New Beginnings Update

By Rev. Krista Rasco

FPC had nine of congregation members join me at the New Beginnings Key Leader training event back on Sept. 12-13 in Richardson. Wally and Barbara Tucker, Toni and Jim Deaton, Bettina Zvanut, Bob Johnson, Dennis White, Neal Stewart, and Keith McFarland were all there. The training event gave us a lot of information in a short amount of time (I slept for 10 hours after getting home from this event).

At the end of the event, we had to come up with a date that we would start the New Beginnings small group meetings and how they would be conducted. We decided to wait until after the holidays to get started.

We will start with a big rally event on **Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>** after church, followed by small groups meeting once a week for six weeks after this “kick off” event. Until that time, the small group “key leaders” will meet periodically as a group to review and get to the know the material so that the small groups can run as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

This is an exciting program, one that really aims to let our congregation make a decision for its future rather than someone from the outside making the decision.

I feel like there is a lot of enthusiasm, compassion, and drive in this congregation. I’m excited to see where we go with this!

*Note: A meeting for our leaders in the New Beginnings program will be held after the Morning Worship Service on Oct. 5.*

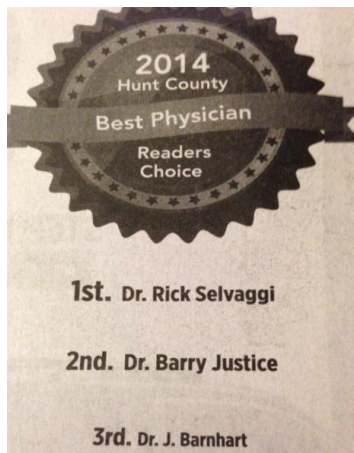
## Newsmakers

FPC’s **Rick Selvaggi** was recognized in Tuesday’s Readers Choice Special Section of the Greenville newspaper.

He received the Readers Choice Award as the “Best Physician” in Hunt County.

Dr. Selvaggi, who is board certified in Family Practice and Geriatric Practice, works at the Live Oak Professional Center here in Commerce.

Way to go, Dr. Selvaggi!



## Absences

Some staff members will take some time off this month.

**Church Secretary Roger McKenzie** will be gone Friday, Oct. 3 and also on Monday and Tuesday for personal reasons. He will be back in the office on Wednesday, Oct. 8.

Dee Ann Gorham will be substituting for Toni Deaton on the organ at some point this month.

**Rev. Rasco** will attend a continuing education event—the Small Church Pastors’ Retreat—at Mo-Ranch from Oct. 13-16. She will get to hear more from Ann Philbrick (who has been leading the informational and training sessions for New Beginnings) and take a preaching workshop as well as participate in other retreat offerings.

Rev. Rasco will also be on vacation from Oct. 29-Nov. 5. She will be participating in her best friend’s wedding near Houston and attending the Company of New Pastors Retreat in Dallas.

## October Worship Leaders

**Note: Starting this month, there will be no Host Elder except on Communion Sundays**

### October 5

Host Elder: ..... **Barbara Tucker**  
Head Usher: ..... **Jim Norwood**  
Candle Lighter: ..... **Mason Howard**  
Liturgist: ..... **Bettina Zvanut**  
Elements: ..... **Dennis White**

### October 12

Head Usher: ..... **Scott Stewart**  
Candle Lighter: ..... **Matthew McFarland**  
Liturgist: ..... **Barbara Tucker**

### October 19

Head Usher: ..... **Ric Estes**  
Candle Lighter: ..... **Lily Selvaggio**  
Liturgist: ..... **Walt Davis**

### October 26

Head Usher: ..... **Bob Johnson**  
Candle Lighter: ..... **Matthew McFarland**  
Liturgist: ..... **Dennis White**

*Thanks to these folks and those who in the past have made our worship experience more meaningful..*

*If you would like to take part in the worship service in some way, contact the church secretary or Pastor Rasco.*

## Church at Work

The High School/Middle School class is planning a "Kiss the Pig!" fundraiser in order to



attend SHY-C in late January. SHY-C is a gathering of about 600 Presbyterian High School kids from our Grace Presbytery. They meet at Austin College for Bible study, singing,

games, and worship.

Lily Selvaggi and Mason Howard came up with the idea because Mason is raising a pig in ag class. They chose four "victims" from our congregation because of their visibility in the community: Dr. Joe Fred Cox, Mrs. Sherry Johnson, Dr. Rick Selvaggi, and Rev. Krista Rasco.

The students will put four jars in the back of the sanctuary which will also be in the office during the week. People can donate any sum for the jar of their favorite candidate to kiss the pig. Please tell your friends and family about the fundraiser in case any of them have a preference on who will kiss the baby pig. It's name is Sir Little Bacon.

\* \* \* \*

The **Caring Committee** visited Diane Little at Oak Manor Nursing Home on Wednesday, Sept. 24. Toni Deaton played several old hymns on the piano for Rev. Krista, Bettina Zvanut, and Diane to sing. Then she read several funny poems for the group.

Next Bettina played a hymn for them to sing on her guitar. Diane enjoyed the singing and news about the church and community. Anyone interested in visiting or making food for members of our church community can let Bettina Zvanut know at: 903-886-8053.

\* \* \* \*

The **Worship Committee** met on Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2014. Attending were: Barbara Tucker, Chair; Jim Deaton, Co-Chair; Helon Razniak, Martha Clevenger, Wally Tucker, and Krista Rasco, ex-officio.

Plans were made for World Communion Sunday on Oct. 5.

Different color breads will be used, representing the races and cultures of the world celebrating with us. Leftover bread will be available for sampling following the worship service.

Plans for the Advent season were discussed and the following decisions were made:

1. Advent study guides titled "*Joy in Jesus*" will be purchased by the church and placed on the entry tables on Nov. 23. Congregation members are encouraged to use them for their spiritual preparation during Advent.
2. Church groups will be asked to light the Advent candles each Sunday of Advent:  
Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> – Presbyterian Women  
Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> – Choir  
Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> – Youth  
Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> – Food Pantry  
Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> – Reverend Rasco and Family
3. A new Christ candle will be purchased and used starting the first Sunday in Advent.
4. Helon Razniak and Wally Tucker volunteered to erect and decorate the Christmon Tree on Saturday, Nov. 29. Other volunteers are encouraged, of course.
5. Poinsettias will be used to decorate the front of the church during Advent. Helon Razniak will place order forms in the bulletin, giving the cost and deadline for ordering.
6. The TAMUC Chorale will perform Sunday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. in our sanctuary. Jim Deaton will coordinate between the church and the university. The Presbyterian Women have volunteered to host a reception in the Fellowship Hall for chorale members and concert attendees following the concert.
7. The format for the Christmas Eve service was discussed. Reverend Rasco will be in charge of that service.

A discussion about the duties of the Host Elder and Head Usher produced a change. It was determined that a Host Elder was necessary only on Sundays when communion was to be served. On that Sunday, the Host Elder is responsible for enlisting elders to serve communion. The new Worship Leadership Schedule this month reflects that change.

## FPC Family Losses

### Geraldine Branom

*A graveside memorial service for Geraldine Branom will be conducted at Rosemound Cemetery in Commerce at 10 a.m. on Oct. 11.*

### Obituary for

#### Elizabeth Hunt Davis Mazzocco

Elizabeth Hunt Davis Mazzocco died Wednesday afternoon, Sept 24, 2014, at Bay State Medical Center in Springfield, MA. She was born February 11, 1958, in Chapel Hill, NC, to Betty Hunt Seeger Davis and Bertran E Davis. Following several moves during her childhood, the family settled in Commerce, TX, where she graduated from high school and earned the recognition of Valedictorian for the class of 1976.

She received her B.A. in English and History from East Texas State University in 1980. In 1983 she received her M.A. in Medieval Studies, and in 1988 her Ph.D. in Italian Studies, both from Bryn Mawr College. She married Angelo Mazzocco on October 7, 1990.

After receiving her PhD, she taught Italian at the University of Pennsylvania (1988-89), and at Mt. Holyoke College (1989-90); in 1990 she was appointed Five College Visiting Assistant Professor of Italian and Director of the Five College Foreign Language Resource Center. She was tenured and promoted to the rank of Five College Associate Prof. of Italian in 2000, and to full Professor in 2004 while continuing in her role of the now called Five College Center for the Study of World Language.

Under her directorship, the Center gained worldwide recognition for research on the advancement of language pedagogy. She has published extensively and given numerous lectures on foreign language acquisition and on Italian Renaissance. She was currently developing a platform for blended learning for languages eventually intended for public use.

Elizabeth was a unique blend of generosity, determination, strength and tenacity, always guided by the most genuine selflessness.

She is proceeded in death by her parents and survived by her husband, Angelo, Amherst, MA; step-son Marco Mazzocco, New York City; sister Sally Hunt Faires and husband Jim, Dallas, TX; niece

Annabella Boatwright, Northampton MA; nephew Ben Boatwright, Cambridge, MA; and numerous relatives, friends, and colleagues.

Visitation (was) at Douglass Funeral Home, Amherst, MA, Monday afternoon Sept. 29 from 2-4:30 followed by a memorial service at 5:30 at Johnson Chapel on the Amherst College campus. Interment (was) at Wildwood Cemetery, Amherst, MA, Tuesday at 11:00 am.

Donations may be made to the Elizabeth HD Mazzocco memorial fund to be established to honor her legacy in teaching and scholarship. Inquiries should be addressed to Lucia Miller, Dean's Office, College of Humanities and Fine Arts ([luciam@admin.umass.edu](mailto:luciam@admin.umass.edu)). -[Elizabeth Hunt Davis Mazzocco](#)

### In Our Prayers at First Presbyterian

*If you have anyone you would like to add to the Prayer List, contact the church office.*



|                           |                                    |                   |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Our Troops                | Diane Little                       | Gordon Hunter     |
| Jace Carrington           | Bruce Campbell                     | Sara Grace Pullen |
| Melba Blount              | Amy Lopez                          | Billy Marshall    |
| Barbara Leonard           | Riley Isom                         | Joe Yeakley       |
| Rev. Roy Ditmar           | Pat McFadden                       | Peri Poole        |
| Beverly Housewright       | Todd Shinn                         | Edwin Greene      |
| Suzanne Dickinson         | Family of Geraldine Branom         |                   |
|                           | Family of Elizabeth Davis Mazzocco |                   |
| Grandmother of Rev. Rasco |                                    | Joyce McCord      |



### Don't Forget Food Pantry Items

**1st Sunday**—Peanut butter and/or jelly

**2nd Sunday**—Bag of pinto beans and/or rice

**3rd Sunday**—Box of cereal or oatmeal

**4th Sunday**—Cans of tuna, spam, chicken

**5th Sunday**—Cans of fruit: peaches, fruit cocktail





*Thank you for all the prayers and food and cards from friends, and my church family. It will take a few more weeks to heal and get my energy back and hopefully I will be seating back in my pew sometime in November.*

*Beverly Housewright*

## A Message From the Pastor

*Continued from page 1*

*If you are interested in volunteering with this program call Nancy Laws at 903-886-3756, at her office in AC Williams Elementary School. You will have an application and a background check to go through. Then you will be assigned a student.*

*What a wonderful way to volunteer in this community, to try and help the life of at least once child, and in doing so helping our own community out. I know the people of this congregation are big about mission work and helping this community out and I really appreciate that about you! Also if you know of any other programs that help this community, or even need volunteers let me know. Maybe we could start a "volunteer" page on our web page.*

*Grace and peace be with you all!*

*Rev. Krista Rasco*

## Our Facebook Presence Is Growing!

FPC now has a presence on Facebook! Go to [www.facebook.com/fpccommerce](http://www.facebook.com/fpccommerce).

Come for a visit!

## Greetings from Washington, D.C

Susan Reeves sent FPC the picture below while on a trip to our nation's capital. The picture is an old one (note the cars) of the First Presbyterian Church on New York Avenue.

Contemplate the cutline below referring to President Abraham Lincoln which was under the picture:



*Sundays offered a break from regular office hours, but no respite from the war. Though he never formally joined it, Lincoln often attended services at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. Shying away from the role of public theologian, the president remarked humorously, "It has been my experience that folks who have not vices have very few virtues."*

## October Dates to Remember

### Happy Birthday to:

- 1 – Jody McIntier
- 2 – Jim Norwood
- 2 – Wendell Linton
- 5 – Paula Ballew
- 7 – Pierce Taylor Wells
- 13 – Toni Deaton
- 22 – Amber Estes Porterfield
- 24 – Ennis McIntier
- 30 – James Rhodes

### Happy Anniversary to:

- 2 – Sherry & Bob Johnson
- ? – Joel & Leeza McIntier
- 11 – Deborah & Lance Wells
- 19 – Wendell & Charlene Linton

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If we overlooked your birthday or anniversary, please let us know.

## October Calendar

### Worship Schedule

- 5— Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.  
Communion Sunday  
Sermon focus on Exodus 20:1-4,  
7-9, 12-20.  
*The Ten Commandments*
- 12— Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.  
Sermon focus on Exodus 32:1-14  
*The Golden Calf*
- 19— Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.  
Sermon focus on Exodus 33:12-23  
*Moses' Intercession*
- 26— Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.  
Sermon focus on Deuteronomy 34:1-12  
*Moses Dies and Is Buried in Moab*

### Other October events

- 5— After church meeting for New Beginnings leaders to go over small group manuals and training.
- 7— 11 a.m. -2 p.m. Mission and Evangelism Committee booth sharing cookies and information about FPC with students in the TAMUC Student Union Center.  
— 6-10 p.m. *National Night Out* FPC will have a table at 1103 Sycamore in the Public Safety Building to share information about us and offer a fun activity for kids.
- 7, 21— Tuesdays at 9 a.m. Teach the Preacher  
(Note: no Teach the Preacher on Oct. 14, 28)
- 8— Session meeting, 6 p.m.
- 12— After church congregational meeting to nominate session elders.
- 25— Presbyterian Women's Fall Meeting in Athens, TX.

## Grace Presbytery News

In a statement released Sept. 7, Grace Presbytery announced the settlement and terms of agreement to end the lawsuit brought by Dallas' Highland Park Presbyterian Church, the largest church in the Presbytery. The settlement paves the way for Highland Park to leave the Presbytery and keep its property.

Here is the Grace Presbytery statement, which was released on the Presbytery's website:

*Highland Park Presbyterian Church will pay \$7.8 million to Grace Presbytery in order to obtain both a release of its obligations under the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s trust clause and ecclesiastical dismissal from the denomination.*

*The settlement agreement - which also includes an agreement between Highland Park and Grace Presbytery to send a joint letter to the members of Highland Park allowing them the opportunity to choose whether they wish to remain affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) - will resolve the pending lawsuit between Grace Presbytery and Highland Park.*

*The lawsuit involved a dispute between Highland Park and Grace Presbytery over whether the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s trust clause, which Highland Park agreed to abide by, is legally enforceable under Texas law. Ultimately, three experts in Texas trust law retained by Grace Presbytery agreed that Highland Park's agreement to hold its property in trust for the use and benefit of the denomination was enforceable under neutral principles of Texas law.*

*In an attempt to privately resolve their disagreement before trial, Grace Presbytery and Highland Park entered into a mediation process presided over by former federal Judge Jeff Kaplan on February 21 and August 25, 2014. Judge Kaplan worked tirelessly to bring the parties to an agreement to resolve the case. The parties reached an agreement in principle at mediation, which obtained final approval of the parties last night. The \$7.8 million settlement figure represents 26% of Highland Park's "approximately thirty million dollars" of property, as alleged in Paragraph 18 of Highland Park's amended petition filed in the lawsuit.*

*In response to the settlement, Rev. Dr. Janet DeVries, General Presbyter of Grace Presbytery, said, "We give thanks to God for this moment and trust that this settlement serves as a witness across the PC(USA) that the trust clause is an integral part of our constitution and will be taken seriously by Grace Presbytery. We are pleased to have been able to mediate this situation and avoid a court trial. We are grateful for the strong support of Grace Presbytery in this cause and colleagues across the larger church as well."*

*Grace Presbytery wishes to thank the many of you who have shared your kind thoughts, prayers, and support during this difficult time of litigation filed by Highland Park. Throughout this process, we have sought to vindicate the connectional nature of the Church, which is reflected by our Book of Order and which Paul described so well in 1 Corinthians 12: "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ." Grace Presbytery believes that the resolution of this lawsuit has accomplished this goal, and fervently hopes that it can avoid all legal disputes with congregations in the future.*

## **Road Work Continues**

As you know if you've attended church lately, the paving of Monroe Street is underway. We have already included pictures in previous newsletters, so if you want to see the latest stage of work, all you have to do is look out FPC's front door.

No completion date is yet available, but the work does seem to be progressing steadily—at last.

## **TAMUC Fall Music Festival**

An upcoming community event that's sure to be a hit on a cool Friday evening is the Fall Music Festival sponsored by TAMUC's Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and Sigma Alpha Iota on the square in downtown Commerce. It all happens on Friday, Oct. 12 from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Admission is free. In addition to musical performances from elementary through the university level, there will be food, games, and other attractions.

## **Late Breaking News**

FPC member **Joyce McCord** has notified Rev. Rasco that she will undergo shoulder surgery on Thursday, Oct. 9 at UT Southwest Medical Center near I-35 in Dallas.

She expects to stay there for three days then move to a rehabilitation facility closer to home.



## **Next Newsletter Oct. 10**

Because of the timing in the middle of the week for this newsletter, there will be no Friday weekly newsletter this week. Our next newsletter will be published on Friday, Oct. 10.