



# THE GOOD NEWS

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

December 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

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## A Message From the Pastor

*Advent marks the beginning of the new church year and begins four Sundays prior to Christmas Day (November 30<sup>th</sup> this year). During the Advent season, the church prepares for the coming Christ. Even as we make ready for the baby to be born in Bethlehem, the themes and texts explored during Advent take us beyond the birth, and even beyond the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, to a new moment of expectancy as the Day of Christ approaches and the reign of God is made fully manifest.*

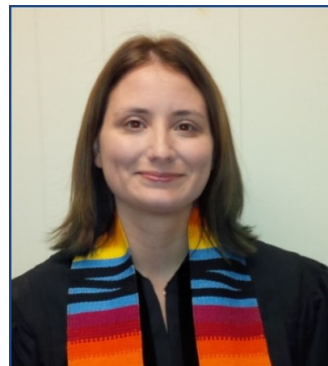
*At Advent, God's people summon the courage and spiritual strength to remember that the holy breaks into the daily. In tiny ways, we can open our broken hearts to the healing grace of God, who opens the way to peace. Advent is not a season for passive waiting and watching. It is a season of wailing and weeping, of opening up our lives and our souls with active anticipation and renewed hope.*

*But we can become distracted about what the days leading up to Christmas can mean, with the busy-ness of cleaning, cooking, enjoying parties, and shopping for the perfect gift for our loved ones.*

*There's nothing wrong with wanting to buy the latest gadgets or to make progress on that wish list.*

*But somehow Christmas Eve is here before we know it and we wonder why we don't feel renewed after this joyous season.*

*We're inviting you to enter this season of Advent with intention and awareness. As we prepare, watch and wait for that wonderful something God is sending our way not just at Christmas, but every single day.*



Continued on page 4

## Advent Season Has Arrived

Advent study guides "*Joy in Jesus*" are available on tables in the Sanctuary and the rear entry area. Please pick one up if you are interested in preparing spiritually during Advent.

Church groups will be asked to light the Advent candles each Sunday of Advent: This past Sunday, it was the Presbyterian Women. In the coming weeks, it will be:

- Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> – Choir
- Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> – Food Pantry
- Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> – Presbyterian Women
- Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> – Reverend Rasco and Family

Poinsettias will be used to decorate the front of the church during Advent. Order forms were placed in the worship bulletin. Order deadline is Dec. 2.

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.

## Don't Forget Food Pantry Items

Christmas doesn't spare the hungry. In a season of giving and love, it is even more important to make sure food is available for those who need it.



A lot of good people are keeping that in mind by making donations to the Food Pantry. Please be a part of that effort. Remember to help out the food pantry with a donation of food each Sunday.

**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

## Presbyterian Women

**Tea Party**—All women are invited to a Christmas Tea Party at Helon Razniak's home on Saturday, Dec. 6, at 10 a.m. Helon and Martha Clevenger are co-hosting this annual event.

**Christmas CDs Help PW Help Others**—Our Presbyterian Women are making Christmas CD's available to support the Birthday Offering and Living Waters of the World (LWW). LWW trains and equips volunteer teams to provide clean water in needy areas throughout the developing world and the Birthday Offering supports up to five different projects each year that meet a critical need for persons who are truly hurting or disadvantaged.

Either of two different CDs which feature familiar Christmas songs and carols (vocal and instrumental) are available for a \$15 voluntary donation. Last year more than \$100,000 was raised. The music has been arranged and performed specifically for the Presbyterian project.

Last year's recording, "Legacy Christmas—Treasured Carols of the Kirk," will again be available as will a new CD entitled "Legacy Christmas—Nativity Carols and Hymns."

This is an opportunity to support God's work and at the same time enhancing your holiday listening pleasure.



## New Beginnings Update

The new "kick-off" date for FPC's New Beginnings effort is Sunday, Jan. 18, after church.

Sign up sheets to join a small group will go up the first Sunday in January.

## Happy New Year

In case you forgot, we have started a new year—new church year, that is. Year B in the Revised Common Lectionary Cycle began this past Sunday (Nov. 30), which also marked the beginning of the Advent season.



Rev. Rasco will be using youth moments, sermons, bulletin space and other creative ways to teach

about the church year, including but not limited to its seasons, colors, special Sundays, symbols, and parts of worship. Look for more stories from the church mouse.

### December Dates to Remember

#### Happy Birthday to:

- 1 - Barbara Tucker
- 2 - Martha Clevenger
- 4 - Charles Elliott
- 5 - Diane Little
- 6 - Noemi Goodwin
- 8 - Susan White
- 10 - Isabel Davis
- 10 - Ken Miller
- 12 - Mark Pullen
- 14 - Nancy McFarland
- 19 - Sherry Johnson
- 19 - Petra Strassberg
- 23 - Steve Costa
- 24 - Sharon Sanders
- 28 - Beverly Murphy
- 28 - Jack Duncan Pierce
- 29 - Kathy Miller
- 30 - Jane Cox

#### Happy Anniversary to:

- 14 – Debbie & Monty Howard
- 19 – Christy & Chris Jenson

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If we overlooked you, please let us know.

## Sermon Focus

Rev. Rasco continued using the Old Testament as the source for her sermon this past Sunday when the focus was Isaiah 64:1-9. This Sunday (Dec. 7), the second Sunday in Advent, she will back up a little as she reads Isaiah 40:1-11 whose subhead is “God’s People Are Comforted.”

### 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	Peri Poole	Todd Shinn
Joyce McCord	Family of Dave Walvoord	
Family of Larry Harris	Bill and Lisa Rhoades	

### December Calendar

#### Worship Schedule

- 7 Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.  
Communion Sunday  
*Sermon focus on Isaiah 40:1-11*
- 14 Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.  
*Sermon focus on Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11*
- 21 Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.  
*Sermon focus on 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16*
- 23 **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 5:30 p.m.**
- 28 Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.  
*Sermon focus on Isaiah 61:10-62:3*

#### Other December events

- 2, 9, 16 **Tuesdays, 9 a.m.** Teach the Preacher
- 6 **Saturday, 10 a.m.** Presbyterian Women Tea Party in the home of Helon Razniak.
- 7 **Sunday, 5 p.m.** Holiday Concert by TAMUC’s Music Chamber Singers
- 10 **Wednesday, 6 p.m.** FPC Session meeting
- 17 **Wednesday, 5 p.m.** New Beginnings Leader Training session



## Message From the Pastor

Continued from page 1

Whatever your practices this season, I invite you to take a moment each day to think about a word and scripture for each day leading up to Christmas Day. **Capture a picture** with your phone, or camera, or write a journal entry, a poem, draw something, or **create something** (however you want to best express yourself) **that reminds you** of that **word** or scripture listed on **each day**. Then you can **share it** with the rest of FPC through the many ways listed below. Don't forget to use the hashtag also listed below to connect all the pictures together! When you post you don't need to explain anything – **just post it**. If you are not on these social media sites then you are invited to bring your pictures or creations to church on Sunday and there will be a place in the hallways to post them and be able to see other's posts.

So, will you join us by opening your eyes to witness the hope that is already springing up around you? Will you open your hearts for Immanuel, God with us?

**Connect with this project online:**

**Website:** [www.fpc-commerce.com](http://www.fpc-commerce.com) **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/group/fpcccommerce](https://www.facebook.com/group/fpcccommerce)

**Twitter:** @FpcCommerce with #FpcCommerceAdvent (and/or) # "wordoftheday" i.e. #hope and/or #advent2014

**Pinterest:** [www.pinterest.com/FpcCommerce](http://www.pinterest.com/FpcCommerce)

Don't forget to go to [www.rethinkchurch.org](http://www.rethinkchurch.org) who will also be posting a daily word throughout advent.

\*This article was adapted from Feasting OnThe Word Advent Companion and from ReThinkChurch.org's website.



**Advent 2014 Photo-A-Day**

Use each day's word or verse as a starting point for an image, poem, song, journal entry, or something that speaks to you.

30 Hope (Ps. 80:3)	13 Righteousness (Ps. 85)
1 Presence (Is. 64:1)	14 Joy (Ps. 126)
2 Angels (Mk 13:32)	15 Justice (Is. 61:8)
3 People (Is. 64:9)	16 Rejoice (1 Thes. 5:16)
4 Shepherd (Ps. 80:1)	17 Testify (Jn 1:7)
5 Awake (Mk. 13:39-37)	18 Good News (Is 61:1)
6 Fellowship (1 Cor. 1:9)	19 Give Thanks (1 Thes. 5:18)
7 Peace (Ps. 85:8,10)	20 Go (2 Sam. 7:1-11)
8 Comfort (Is. 40:1)	21 Love (Ps. 89:1-2)
9 Patience (2 Ptr. 3:9,15)	22 Mystery (Rm 16:25)
10 Prophet (Mk. 1:2-4)	23 Holy (Lk. 1:35,49)
11 Prepare (Is. 40:3)	24 Light (Is. 9:2-7)
12 Wait (2 Ptr. 3:13)	25 Life (Jn. 1:4)

 [www.fpc-commerce.com](http://www.fpc-commerce.com)  [pinterest.com/fpcccommerce](https://www.pinterest.com/fpcccommerce)

 @FpcCommerce  [facebook.com/groups/fpcccommerce](https://facebook.com/groups/fpcccommerce)

#FpcCommerceAdvent # "word" i.e. #hope #advent2014

## New Hymnals! Glory to God

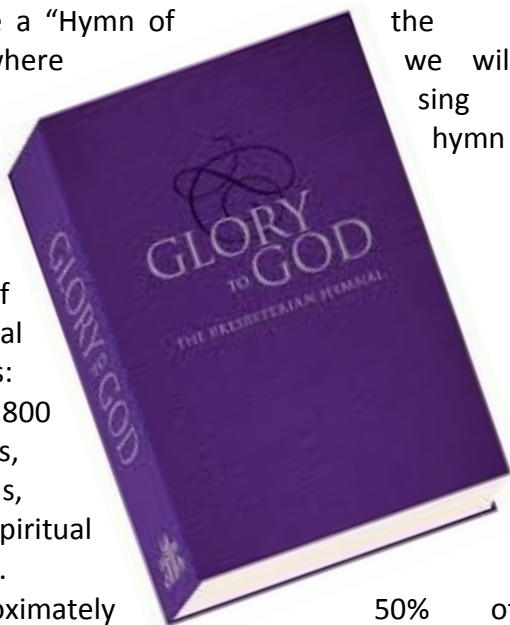
It's a go on new hymnals, thanks to the generosity of FPC's Jane and Joe Fred Cox who insured success by offering a donation to purchase the first 100 hymnals!

A BIG thank-you to Jane and Joe Fred. Pastor Rasco is very appreciative and excited about using this new hymnal. Starting in January, we will have a "Hymn of the Month" where we will learn and sing one new hymn a month.

The *Glory to God* hymnal of congregational song includes:

- Over 800 hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs.
- Approximately 50% of included hymns are from the 1990 Presbyterian hymnal. The remaining pieces come from former Presbyterian hymnals, other denominational songbooks, and individual authors and composers.
- A musical setting of almost every Sunday lectionary psalm.
- Music from six different continents.
- Music covering all major historical and contemporary sacred genres, including approximately thirty-five African American/Gospel hymns.
- Comprehensive indexes.

*Glory to God* also contains worship aids and printed liturgies for Sunday services (including baptism and the Lord's Supper) and services for daily prayer. Complete orders of service will include congregational responses, prayers, and creeds. These will be perfect resources for "green" congregations, camps and conference centers, daily prayer services, and time-pressed pastors.



## It's All About That Grace

Speaking of music, Rev. Dr. John Williams, the chaplain and director of church relations at Austin College (where Krista graduated from), and also a songwriter himself, posted the following rewrite of Meghan Trainor's, popular hit, "All About that Bass" on facebook after WARP (Weekend Activity Retreat in Palo Duro) a Palo Duro Presbytery Youth conference held in November. The ACTivators, The Mobile Youth Ministry Team, made up of Austin College students, and led by Dr. Williams, have led the retreat now for over 20 years.

Rev. Rasco, always on the lookout for something catchy, liked what she heard and noted, "I wouldn't be surprised if the youth hear it at the upcoming SHYC (Sr. High Youth Conference) in January. I think this is a much better version to have stuck in your head all day!"

She posted the words, and here they are:

### I'm all about that Grace

Because you know I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, no Devil  
I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, no Devil  
I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, no Devil  
I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, Grace, Grace, Grace

Yeah, it's pretty clear, I'm a sinner too  
But I can pray it, pray it like I'm supposed to do  
I got Big, Steady, Love that all the folks chase  
And all of God's Grace in all the right places

I see the Instagram, workin' that Photoshop  
We know that stuff ain't real; c'mon now make it stop  
If you got Love, Big, Steady, just raise 'em up  
'Cause every inch of you's forgiven from the bottom to the top

My Lord, he done told me, Don't worry about your sins  
'Cause I've got you covered so you can sleep sound at night"  
You know I won't be no artificial Poser child of God  
So if that's what you're into then go ahead and move along

*Continued on next page*



## All About that Grace

*Continued from page 5*

Because you know I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, no Devil

I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, no Devil

I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, no Devil

I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace

Hey!--Jesus is coming back

Go ahead and tell them silly sinners that

No, I'm not playing; already told you that

But, here to tell you

Every inch of you's forgiven, from the bottom to the top

My Lord, he done told me, "Don't worry about your sins

'Cause I've got you covered so you can sleep sound at night"

You know I won't be no artificial Poser child of God

So if that's what you're into then go ahead and move along

Because you know I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, no Devil

I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, no Devil

I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, no Devil

I'm all about that Grace, 'bout that Grace, Grace,

Grace, Grace

**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!—BIG! STEADY! LOVE!**

*This was performed by the Adult sponsors at the Palo Duro Presbytery WARP'D Youth Conference. The theme was "Big Steady Love."*

## Kiss the Pig!

FPC's contest to help send our youth to camp is nearing its end. The pig is ready. Are the contestants? No word on that yet. A tentative date of Dec. 14 has been set, with the event following the worship service that day.

A stew lunch is also in the works. If you haven't voted there's still a little time left. Sorry, there is no update on who is leading the race.



## Community Musical Events

Music abounds during early December. In addition to the TAMU-C Chamber Singers Holiday Concert right here at FPC on **Dec. 7** (at 5 p.m.), there is a lot more music to enjoy.

**Dec. 1**—Tonight at 7:30 p.m. is the Sixth Annual Choral Candlelight Concert. A variety of choral music will be served up in Finney Concert Hall.

**Dec. 5-6**—The Department of Music at Texas A&M University-Commerce will present its annual holiday gala on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 5-6, at 7:30 p.m. each night in Finney Concert Hall. For tickets, go online at [www.tamuc.edu/music](http://www.tamuc.edu/music) or call 903-886-5303.

Space is limited, so if you would like to attend The Annual Holiday Gala, get your tickets early. The event features the chamber groups and ensembles from all the studios within the Department of Music.

## Christmas Festivities This Weekend

Dec. 6-7 will be filled with Christmas festivities for young and young at heart.

**Merry Marketplace**—On Saturday, Dec. 6, starting at 10 a.m. and going until 1 p.m., the First United Methodist Church offers food, entertainment, and gifts at its Merry Marketplace and Lunch for Missions event.

A homemade stew and cornbread lunch starts things off, with youth and children's choirs entertaining visitors and a Christmas Craft Station for kids.

There will be baked goods, and other Christmas finds to discover, as well as Christmas decorations and alternative gifts.

All proceeds go directly to missions.

**Bois d'Arc Christmas Celebration and Parade**—The City of Commerce through the Chamber of Commerce continues the fun starting at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6, with more music, food and craft vendor—and pictures with Santa!

Events will include a fashion show at 4 p.m., Christmas movies at 5:30 p.m. and a 7 p.m. parade.

**Christmas Home Tour**—on Sunday, Dec. 7, the Psychology Club, a Commerce Women's Club since 1925, holds its home tour from 2-4 p.m. Tickets are available at the Northeast Texas Children's Museum, at Hwy. 50 or McDaniel General Dentistry at 2700 Monroe Street, or from any club member.



## December Worship Leaders

### December 7

Host Elder: ..... Sherry Johnson  
Head Usher: ..... Ric Estes  
Candle Lighter: ..... Lily Selvaggi  
Liturgist: ..... Tina Selvaggi  
Elements: ..... Ric Estes

### December 14

Head Usher: ..... Joyce Isaacs  
Candle Lighter: ..... Matthew McFarland  
Liturgist: ..... Walt Davis

### December 21

Head Usher: ..... Monty Howard  
Candle Lighter: ..... Lily Selvaggi  
Liturgist: ..... Dennis White

### December 28

Head Usher: ..... Scott Stewart  
Candle Lighter: ..... Mason Howard  
Liturgist: ..... Bettina Zvanut

*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.*

## Don't Forget



**Please keep us informed and let us know about news items we can use for our next newsletter. Call or email (we prefer email) the**

**church office with your news.**

**Thanks for all your help!**

## Our Internet Presence Is Growing!

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

[www.facebook.com/group/fpccommerce](http://www.facebook.com/group/fpccommerce).

Come for a visit!

Also check out our Twitter presence: and our website at:

<https://twitter.com/fpccommerce>

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