



# The Good News

Mid-Month Edition



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## *Happy Thanksgiving*

*We all certainly need to be thankful for the many blessings we enjoy. Sure, there is pain, hardship, and all manner of obstacles that may sometimes get in the way of recognizing those blessings. But on Thanksgiving Day, we generally set those things aside and focus on what we have, not what we don't have.*

*That makes for warm, fuzzy family gatherings and pleasant memories of being full and satisfied. But when we go back to our everyday activities, for many people the obstacles again take precedence.*

*Don't let that happen. Keep focusing.*

*That focus, kept throughout the year, would go a long way toward making our world a better place. And if we could use that focus to look, not just at ourselves, but at those around us and our neighbors in the world, it would be better still. And if we could use that focus not just for inner thought and contemplation, but for action, then we can create a better world for all of us.*

*The key is to remember that the focus we need to utilize is one of God's many blessings—freely given to us out of God's abundant grace and love. You see, another name for that focus is love.*

*God first loved us and continues to love us so much that he sent his Son to take on our sin. God's love is at the heart of everything. It is given to us all, regardless of our circumstances. It is our greatest blessing of all.*

*Keep focusing and Happy Thanksgiving.*

## **Food Pantry Closed on Thanksgiving, But FUMC Offers Thanksgiving Dinner**

The Commerce Food Pantry will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 24, for Thanksgiving. Clients of the food pantry (as well as others in the community who won't be cooking that day) are instead encouraged to participate in the annual Thanksgiving dinner hosted by the First United Methodist Church in Commerce from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Open to the entire community, it is traditional Thanksgiving feast—roasted turkey and dressing, green beans, sweet potatoes and homemade pie. So if you can't cook, don't want to cook, or don't want to eat by yourself, come on over to FUMC, which is located at 1709 Hwy. 50 in Commerce (across the highway from the TAMUC campus and football stadium).

If you can't get a ride to the dinner, rides will be offered; and if you are unable to get out, food delivery is available. However, please call FUMC at 903-886-3220 to make arrangements no later than Tuesday, Nov. 22.

## A Message From the Pastor



The season for Advent is right around the corner. Advent is a time of preparing ourselves for the coming of the Christ child. Advent is not about making sure our homes cleaned and decorated, gifts are bought and ready to be given away.

The season of Advent for the church and its members is about preparing our hearts and minds spiritually for the coming of God to Earth. The focus of this year's Advent will be "Your Journey to Christmas." It will all revolve around this year's advent devotional, *Walking the Road to Bethlehem: Your Journey to Christmas*, written by Adam Hamilton.

The first Sunday of Advent starts on Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> and goes until Christmas Eve and we have a lot going on in the life of FPCC during that time.

The worship services on Sundays at 10:50 a.m. will be focused on this theme of journeying through Advent, towards Bethlehem, towards the birth of the Christ child. It will be a time of journeying spiritually to prepare our hearts and minds for the in-breaking of God not only into the world but into our own hearts and lives.

I'm particularly excited about the lighted Labyrinth we will have available on the back lawn of the church for the use of the community throughout the entire season of Advent. Thank you to, Dr. Rick Selvaggi for organizing and helping to build this wonderful display. On **Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.** there will be a **guided labyrinth walk "journey"**.

I invite you to join your friends and family at FPCC as we journey together towards Christmas through these other events and worship services as well:

- **Sunday, Nov. 20**—If you have a young person who you know would like to participate in youth led "Hanging of the Greens" worship service on Nov. 27, please join us this Sunday (Nov. 20) to run through the service after worship. Then, you are invited to stay after worship help us put up the **Chrismon Tree!**

- **Sunday, Nov. 27, 10:50 a.m.**—"Hanging of the Greens" Worship Service

- **Wednesday, Nov. 30, 6 p.m.**—Guided Labyrinth Journey

- **Sunday, Dec. 4, 6 p.m.**—TAMU-C Chamber Singers, reception to follow.

- **Sunday, Dec. 11, at 6 p.m.**—Making of Chrismon Ornaments for youth.

- **Wednesday, Dec. 21, 6 p.m.**—Longest Night Worship Service

- **Saturday, Dec. 24, 5:30 p.m.**—Christmas Eve Worship Service

- **Sunday, Dec. 25, 10:50 a.m.**—Christmas Day Worship Service

*Grace and peace be with you, hope and joy as well,  
throughout your journey this Advent Season.*

*Rev. Krista Rasco*

## Don't Forget Food Pantry Items

Remember to help out the food pantry with a donation of food each Sunday.



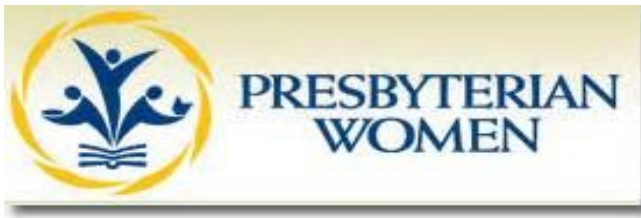
1st Sunday—Peanut butter

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

3rd Sunday—Can of chili or beef stew

4th Sunday—Can of tuna, spam, chicken

5th Sunday—Can of fruit: peaches, fruit cocktail



### • PW Thank Offering

There is still time to contribute to the annual PW Thank Offering! (For more information about this churchwide PW offering which began in the year 1888, please refer to the last newsletter edition.) Treasurer Brenda Estes will accept donations through the month of November.

Make checks payable to Presbyterian Women and list "Thank Offering" in the memo line. Give them to Brenda in person or mail them to her.

### • Help Requested for Concert and Reception

The annual Advent season concert will be held on **Sunday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m.** in our Sanctuary as the University Chamber Singers from TAMU-C perform for our entire community. Following this festive concert a reception will be held in Fellowship Hall.

FPC members are asked to bring finger foods for this special event. PW Circle Chair, Nila McQuary, has prepared a sign-up sheet that will be placed on the table at the rear of the Sanctuary. Please sign up to bring a special dish.

Each year the attendance at this event has increased and we ask that you help by bringing generous amounts for all our guests! Dr. Randall Hooper, Director of the University Chamber Singers, has informed us that there are more students in this elite group this year! Your assistance is very much appreciated.



**COMMERCE FOOD PANTRY HEROES**—Thanksgiving brings out the best in people, especially when it comes to helping those in need. **Erik Pietersma and Brandon McGaffey**, pictured above, are company officers with **Polara Enterprises**, a Commerce company that produces electronic circuit boards. This dynamic duo came by on Nov. 16, bringing a large food donation collected by **company employees**. They also brought employee-raised money donations, matched by the company, as well as some personal donations. The total came to over \$800. Way to go, Polara!





### Bible Readings for this Sunday and Next Sunday

**This Sunday (Nov. 20) is Christ the King Sunday (stay after to put up the Chrismon Tree).**

**Old Testament: Jeremiah 23:1-6** *Restoration after Exile / The Righteous Branch of David*

**Gospel: Luke 1:68-79** *Zechariah's Prophecy*

**Epistle: Colossians 1:11-20** *Paul Thanks God for the Colossians / The Supremacy of Christ*

**Gospel: Luke 23:33-43** *The Crucifixion of Jesus*

### **Next Sunday (Nov. 27) is the First Sunday in Advent**

**This special service includes the Blessing (or Hanging) of the Greens**

**Old Testament: Isaiah 2:1-5** *The Future House of God*

**Psalter: Psalm 122** *Song of Praise and Prayer for Jerusalem*

**Epistle: Romans 13:11-14** *An Urgent Appeal*

**Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44** *The Necessity for Watchfulness*



### **Newsmakers**

### **Invitations**



**DEFINITELY NOT PAINT BY THE NUMBERS**—FPC's **Bettina Zvanut**, president of the local retired teachers organization, poses with FPC's **Walt Davis** (another retired educator) at the group's Nov. 8 meeting. **Ann Julian** (not pictured, but another FPCer and organization member) invited Walt to present the program for the group. Walt, who is an excellent painter, spoke about watercolor techniques of long ago and those used today. He also brought some of his excellent work for the audience to enjoy.

### **Home Alone for the Holidays?**

**Petra Strassberg** is inviting anyone who will be by themselves on Thanksgiving Day and/or Christmas Day to have dinner at her house on those holidays. Dinner will be from 12-2 pm on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

Please contact Petra at 903 274-9444 or at [petrakirsten1@gmail.com](mailto:petrakirsten1@gmail.com).

### **Holiday Open House**

You are invited to a holiday open house hosted by **Bob and Sherry Johnson** at their home on Thursday, Dec. 8, from 5-7 p.m.

### **November Hymn of the Month**

**Page 654 — *In the Lord I'll be Ever Thankful***



### In Our Prayers at First Presbyterian

<b>Our Troops</b>	<b>Gordon Hunter</b>	<b>Jace Carrington</b>	<b>Bruce Campbell</b>
<b>Sara Grace Pullen</b>	<b>Melba Blount</b>	<b>Amy Lopez</b>	<b>Billy Marshall</b>
<b>Joe Yeakley</b>	<b>John Paul Rhodes</b>	<b>Grace Byrd</b>	<b>Gayle Shumate</b>
<b>Gladys Gray</b>	<b>Pat Skaug</b>	<b>Mildred Miller</b>	<b>Amanda Swanson</b>
<b>Gaye Furry</b>	<b>Preston Helton</b>	<b>Loretta Kibler</b>	<b>Joan Walvoord</b>
<b>Brad Rollins</b>	<b>Donald R. Smith</b>	<b>Catherine King Robertson</b>	<b>John Miller Family</b>

### Additions to Prayer List

**Johnny Miller and his family** have been added to our prayer list at his request. He visited FPC last week. He and his wife Catherine and their children are new to Commerce and are trying to settle in. Extend an FPC welcome to them when you see them.

Also, **John Paul Rhodes**, who is on our list, has fallen and is not doing well. Please pray for these folks and all those on our prayer list.

If you know someone who wants to be on our list, let us know so we can add them.

### Upcoming FPC Events

- **Sunday, Nov. 20, 10:50 a.m.**—After worship church directory pictures will be taken AND the Chrismon tree will be put up. Stay to help!
- **Tuesday, Nov. 22, 5 p.m.**—Commerce Food Pantry board meeting
- **Thursday & Friday, Nov. 24-25**—The FPC office will be closed for Thanksgiving.
- **Wednesday, Nov. 30, 6:30 p.m.**—Christian Education Committee meeting

### Assisting with Worship

Our worship leaders this Sunday (Nov. 20) are: **Wendell Linton**, Head Usher; **Jack Walker**, Candle lighter; and **Neal Stewart**, Liturgist.

Next Sunday (Nov. 27)) our worship leaders will be **Monty Howard**, Head Usher; **Sally Walker**, candle lighter, and **Susan Reeves**, liturgist.

If you would like to be a worship leader like these volunteers or if you would like to help in some other way, contact Rev. Rasco or the church secretary. Also, please remember to let our worship leaders know how much you appreciate them.

### Upcoming Community Events

- **Thursday, Nov. 17, 7:30 p.m.**—TAMUC's Fall Band Concert in Finney Hall, featuring the Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, and Concert Band.
- **Saturday, Nov. 19, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.**—Hunt County Gives Thanksgiving Food Basket Distribution at First United Methodist Church in Commerce.
- **Mondays, Nov. 21 and 28, 6 p.m.**—GriefShare at First Baptist Church in the Church Parlor.
- **Thursday, Nov. 24, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.**—Community Thanksgiving Dinner at First United Methodist Church in Commerce.

### Deadlines for The Good News

The December monthly newsletter will come out on Dec. 1. Please have any stories or pictures turned in as soon as possible, but no later than 10 a.m. on Nov. 28.

### Did We Forget Something?



**Maybe we forgot an event you are organizing for FPC or a committee report you wanted to get in The Good News. Whatever you notice is missing, let us know. And if you forgot, remember to remember next time! We can't be informative without you and your input.**