

The Good News

MID-MONTH EDITION

No. 24

December 20, 2018

Published twice monthly by the First Presbyterian Church of Commerce, Texas

Celebrating Christmas the Right Way—the Basics

Actually, I suppose there is no one right way to celebrate the Christmas season. Everyone has their own traditions, but what looks like a tradition to one person may not match up with another person's idea of how to enjoy Christmas. No matter how you celebrate Christmas, there are some basic things to keep in mind to help us celebrate joyfully. I may not get them all, but here is a rundown of some of the things I consider important, in no particular order.

Spread cheerfulness—Not just be cheerful, but spread cheerfulness. After all, Christmas is a celebration of the miraculous birth of Jesus, the Son of God, who came to atone for our sins so that we could have life everlasting. By the way, if it helps, you can substitute happy (or joy) for cheerful.

Be helpful—Jesus spent his life helping people. He encouraged his disciples to do the same. What a great example for us all. Do what you can with the time and resources you have. For this one, you can substitute generous for helpful.

Be humble—It is easy to get carried away. Don't be the center of your celebration. Focus on those around you.

Be forgiving—That is what Christ offers us. What Christ freely gives can be hard to pass on to others. But remember that hatred is a forever and all-consuming effort. It only takes one moment to forgive so you can move your life forward.

Be prayerful—Reserve for yourself moments of contemplation and prayer.

Be thankful—In your prayers and in your interactions with family, friends, and even strangers, be thankful for being in the world God created, with people God created, living with blessings that God sends your way. And in this joyous season, be thankful for the coming of the Son of God.

Special Worship Services at FPC

Bring your friends to one or both of the following special worship services at FPC.

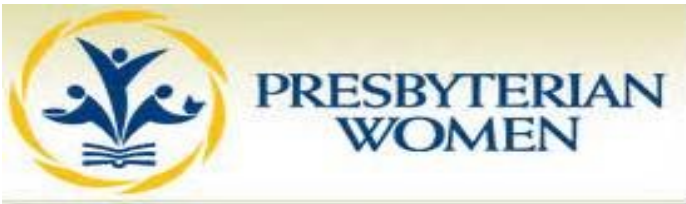
Friday, December 21, 6 p.m.

Longest Night Service
A Service of Hope and Healing

Monday, December 24, 5:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

See you in church!



Next PW Circle Meeting

The PW Circle will meet on Monday, Jan. 14, at 10 a.m. **Toni Deaton** is the scheduled leader and **Martha Clevenger** is the scheduled hostess. Suggested item for the food pantry is evaporated or powdered milk.

“Presbyterian Women? Don’t they always work quietly behind the scenes?”



Presbyterian Women are known for leading and supporting the church. Sometimes we work quietly behind the scenes, but always we speak and live boldly. That’s why we can be found in pulpits and sessions, classrooms and food banks, hospitals and living rooms—anywhere and everywhere we are called to live into Christ’s call to service.

**Think you know Presbyterian Women?
Think again and prepare to be amazed!**

Visit us at www.presbyterianwomen.org

Celebrating Epiphany — Three Kings Day

*Note: If you click on the link below you can see the full article and pictures, which is found in the January/February, 2019 issue of *Presbyterians Today*.*

On January 6, the church celebrates Epiphany, the day that God incarnate in Jesus Christ was manifested to the Magi — the first revelation to the Gentiles. It’s a glorious feast day but unfortunately, not a holiday that most Presbyterians traditionally observe except in passing.

In the Latino tradition, though, *El Día de los Reyes* — Three Kings Day — is a grand and festive occasion, and it has been for centuries. There are reenactments, music, special foods, parades and more.

Presbyterians Today takes us on a visit to several PC(USA) Latino congregations for a look at this beautiful celebration, and we offer several wonderful ways for any church to make this day more special and meaningful.

[Read More →](#)

Grace Presbytery’s monthly newsletter

View the latest Grace eNews by clicking [here](#).

Deadline

*This is the last edition of *The Good News* for 2018.*

Thank you for a great year!

Our first edition in the new year will go out on Friday, Jan. 4. The deadline for your submissions of news and pictures is Wednesday, Jan. 2.

FPC Is Online!

www.facebook.com/fpccommerce

www.facebook.com/group/fpccommerce.

<https://twitter.com/fpccommerce>

www.fpc-commerce.com.



In Our Prayers at First Presbyterian

Our Troops	Gordon Hunter	Sara Grace Pullen	Melba Blount
Amy Lopez	Joe Yeakley	Grace Byrd	Gayle Shumate
Gladys Gray	Mildred Miller	Gaye Furry	Preston Helton
Catherine King Robertson	Bennie Neve	Ron Davis	Jan Burns
Audrey Hucks	Larry Ratliff	Jack Gray	Jean Angotti
Jim Calvert	Tammi Fucci	Adele Reeves	Bob Wilkins
Joe Dipiazza	Deryl McKenzie	Danny Spruel	Kristen Anderson
Family of Freda Lambert	Nancy Smith	Gary and Melba Strobel	Pat Skauge
Joe Tincher	Layne Rylander		

Food Pantry Donation Items

The Commerce Food Pantry typically serves between over 120 families each month. Donations remain an important source of its ability to help these people. Here are suggested donations. There is a box just inside the sanctuary for your donation.

1st Sunday—Instant Oatmeal

2nd Sunday—Ranch Style Beans

3rd Sunday—Spaghetti sauce (in cans)

4th Sunday—Chili without beans

5th Sunday—Canned pineapple

Assisting with Worship

December 23

Head Usher: **Scott Stewart**

Candle Lighter: **TBD**

Liturgist: **Nancy Green**

December 30

Head Usher: **Neal Stewart**

Candle Lighter: **TBD**

Liturgist: **Bart Green**

Please remember to let our worship leaders know how much you appreciate them. If you would like to help with worship in some capacity, please contact Rev. Rasco or the church secretary.

Upcoming Bible Readings

Sunday (Dec. 23) Is the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Gospel: Luke 1:39-45 *Mary Visits Elizabeth*

Gospel: Luke 1:46b-55 *Mary's Song of Praise*

Old Testament (and sermon focus): Micah 5:2-5a
The Ruler from Bethlehem

Sunday (Dec. 30) Is the First Sunday after Christmas Day

Gospel: Luke 2:41-52 *The Boy Jesus in the Temple*

Psalter: Psalm 148 *Praise for God's Universal Glory*

Epistle (and sermon focus): Colossians 3:12-17:
The New Life in Christ



Letters

Dear Friends,

I want to tell everyone at First Presbyterian Church in Commerce how much I appreciate the warm welcome I received at FPC-Commerce. Kindness and acceptance were extended with open hearts and open minds. I moved to Sulphur Springs in October. My new home is a cottage at Wesley House. My sister, Jerry Ann, and her husband Karl have also moved to a cottage at Wesley House. Mom lived in a cottage at Wesley House before she had to move into assisted living at Wesley House.

I continue to work at the university at Commerce and commute each day. It is a pretty drive of Hwy. 11. I am enjoying living in Sulphur Springs. The town has a lovely down town area and great activities almost every week end.

Petra Strassberg

FPC in Action



Children's Advent Adventures
Carolyn McFarland (top left), **Brenda Estes** (bottom right), and **Bettina Zvanut** helped FPC children create nativity scenes, on Dec. 5 in Fellowship Hall. In the photo (above right), is the end result, which was dubbed "I have a family!" by one of the children. There was also hot chocolate and cookies. It made for a great time!
Photos by Rev. Krista Rasco

We need your pictures. If you are present at an FPC event, take pictures and send them to us.

If you take a trip or do something interesting to FPCer's, let us know.

Be sure to send information to explain each picture.



Presbyterian Camp/Workshop Opportunities—Mark Your Calendar Now

If You Are Considering a Retreat at **Camp Gilmont**

(Click on the appropriate underlined event for more information about that event.)

For children

Winter Retreat—December 27-29. This is a great time to gather with summer camp friends and kick off the new year!

Kidquake—April 5-7 and April 26-28. Register as a church for these power packed weekends for younger kids full of fun, ministry and growing together.

GAP Weekends—March 22-24 and 29-31. Register as a church for GAP (God's Awesome People - formerly Spring Youthquake) weekends. Enjoy small groups, fellowship and camp activities.

For adults

Women's Retreat—February 1-3 with Kate McGee - our 10th Anniversary in 2019!

Silent Retreat—March 1-5 - flexible scheduling, come for several days, or for all 5.



903-797-6400

If you are considering sending someone to a youth conference at **Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly**.

Junior High Jubilee

Session I: June 30-July 4, 2019

Session II: July 7-11, 2019

Youth who have completed 6th through 8th grade come together to be inspired to grow in their faith by learning and living the words and deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hundreds of youth participants will gather together in the Hill Country for an unforgettable Mo-Ranch experience that's filled with new friends, spiritual enrichment, worship, study and recreation.

Activities and recreation will include everything from taking a challenge on the Mo ropes course, dancing, games, energizers, vespers and popsicle parties, to aquathons, sports, evening movies, swimming in the beautiful Guadalupe, singing God's praises and more!

[Learn more](#)

Mo-TLC: Teen Leadership Conference

June 9-14, 2019, for youth who have completed grades 9-12

[Learn more](#)

Multicultural Youth Conference

[Learn more](#)

July 4-7, 2019, for youth who have completed grades 6-12.

Youth Celebration, June 23-28, 2019

For high school students who have completed 9-12th grades

[Learn more](#)

Synod Youth Workshop

This event will be held at the University of Tulsa in Tulsa, OK, from July 8-13. It is open to youth who have completed 8th grade through graduated seniors. A flyer about the workshop on one of the church bulletin boards. More information can be found via video link (<https://youtu.be/HYmNwk6VHAs>), and at SynodYouthWorkshop.com

Lux Summer Theological Institute for Youth

A Place at the Table: Thinking Theologically about Hunger and Poverty

Sunday, June 16-Sunday, June 30, 2019

Theologically curious high school students are invited to ***apply before January 1, 2019*** for the ***2019 Lux Summer Theological Institute*** at Presbyterian-related Monmouth College (Monmouth, IL).

Funded by the Lilly Endowment, the Lux Institute is an opportunity for students to engage with a topic of global importance and participate in a living-learning community.

It's FREE! All expenses for the two-week program are covered, with the exception of travel. A free shuttle to/from Chicago airports is provided.

Click on the following link to download more information:

[LEARN MORE ABOUT LUX](#)

Or contact Rev. Jessica Hawkinson, Director at jkhawkinson@monmouthcollege.edu.

New

on the

Bulletin

Board

- ◆ A Christmas card and letter from **the McIntier family—Joe, Jody, Tommy and Penny.**
- ◆ A flyer about the **Synod Youth Workshop** set for July at the University of Tulsa.
- ◆ A notice inviting **senior citizens** to weekly meetings at the Senior Resource Center at the Community Room of the Emergency Care Center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- ◆ A notice to **Friends of Commerce ISD** seeking financial aid for the CISD Special Olympic Tiger Team as it hosts its fifth annual track meet on the TAMUC campus. Between 14-18 schools are expected to participate on Friday, May 3, 2019. Help is needed to provide food and drinks for participants, coaches and volunteers.

Office Closed

Because of the Christmas and New Year holidays, the FPC church office will be closed from Tuesday, Dec. 25 through Monday, Jan. 1, 2019.

Please have a safe and happy holiday season. May the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christ's birth be part of your lives now and in the new year to come.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Christmas Joy Offering

Click [here](#) to see one example of how the Presbyterian Mission's Christmas Joy Offering helped a couple: by keeping a love story alive.

Upcoming Community Events



Note: We are limited in the time we have to search out events. We could not find any community events to report. If you have one, please remember our deadlines and get the information to us by those dates.

Recurring

- ◆ **Northeast Hunt County Retired Teachers Association**—meets from 9:30-11 a.m. on the second Tuesday of the month from September through May at the Alumni Center at TAMUC.

Did We Forget Something?

Maybe it was an event you are organizing for FPC or a committee report you wanted to get in The Good News. Whatever it is, let us know asap. If you forgot, remember to remember next time!



"For to us a child is born...and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

- Isaiah 9:6

Merry Christmas

*And
Happy
New
Year!*