

The Good News

MID-MONTH EDITION

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Lent Has Begun: Where Will You Let Its Journey Take You?

Lent is not just a liturgical season in the church year—or a time to “give something up” for our faith. It is our personal emulation of the journey to the Cross that Jesus traveled. After his baptism, Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness eating nothing. He wasn’t on the mother of all weight loss programs, he was fulfilling prophecy as an example to his disciples (and to us today).

He was sorely tempted by the devil, but did not yield to temptation, and emerged from the wilderness to complete his arduous journey unto death. But his death was not the end. God’s plan was fulfilled and Jesus was resurrected from the grave.

Just like Jesus, we are all tempted to journey off the path to the Cross. Few of us can deny we enjoy comfort, privilege, and power. The temptation comes when we place too much importance on those things or put them in the wrong order to benefit ourselves at the expense of our fellow travelers.

The promise of Lent can be fulfilled, but not by simply accepting that we will be tempted and knowing God will save us for our faith in Jesus when we fail. It is fulfilled when we actively fight our temptations, knowing that God will save us because we have faith in Jesus and, because of that faith, choose good and right over expedience and self, even when we fail.

God expects us to fight the good fight and he gave us his son as a shining beacon to light our way to the finish.

Meet FPC’s newest member—Arlene Allen

FPC’s newest member is **Arlene Allen**. The sister of FPC’s **Susan White**, Allen has been attending here and recently moved her membership from Community Presbyterian Church in Calistoga, California.

Arlene is not new to Texas, however. She was born in Maryland, but grew up in Killeen and lived in Houston before visiting her brother in California and falling in love with it—especially Calistoga, a small town in Napa Valley. She told herself, “I really want to live here.” She soon followed through on her desire to live there and moved in 1988.

But eventually, with her daughters (Alexandra and Allison) grown, the need to downsize and save more for retirement from her accounting career, made her realize she would be heading back to Texas. Adding to her motivation was the desire to be closer to her sisters. The unexpected death of Susan’s husband **Dennis**, made that desire to be near her siblings even more urgent.

This is her new time of life, she said.

Today, Arlene lives with Susan on her 20 acre farm, getting used to chickens and, as they are added,



Arlene Allen

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Session Seeks Maintenance Suggestions

While the Session is representative of the FPC congregation and makes decisions regarding FPC's health and well-being as a church and its mission in Commerce, they still need to know the will of the members of the congregation to do their job properly. That is why Session members would like to hear from you about larger items of church maintenance.

In a perfect world, there would be no need to ask because the Session could just fix or update everything all at once. But in a non-perfect world, constraints on the church budget mean that priorities have to be set. Recent installation of new flooring in Fellowship Hall checks one thing off the FPC list, but there are other needs. With that in mind, you are being asked to start putting together a wish list to help the Session members formulate a maintenance plan for the coming year.

Write your ideas down and put them in the offering plate or email them to the church at fpc-commerce@embarqmail.com. This will be a process and there may be other steps (and requests) before a plan is finalized. However, with your help, Session members are looking forward to announcing the details of the new plan.

Camps, Retreats, Camps, Retreats

Winter is coming to a close and if you yearn to shake off the cobwebs and get busy learning or playing, here are some Presbyterian-rooted camps you might want to consider.

Mo-Ranch in the Texas Hill Country offers a variety of camps for adults and children. Here are two possibilities. For more, go to www.moranch.org.

- **Men's Conference, May 4-6**—an educational and spiritual conference for men, with optional free time to enjoy the outdoors.
- **Grand Camp, July 22-26**—a chance to get away with your grandchildren. [Click here](#) to learn more, or call 1-800-460-4401.

Camp Gilmont near Gilmer is closer to home and also offers a variety of camps and retreats for adults and children. Here are two possibilities. For more, go to www.gilmont.org to learn more or call 1-903-797-6400.

- **Renovaré—Mar. 9-11**—an opportunity for adults to grow in their relationship with each other and with God.
- **KidQuake—April 20-22 or April 27-29**—a weekend of fun, ministry, and building relationships and connection. This God-centered event is organized in cooperation with Grace Presbytery.

February Hymn of the Month

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March Good News Deadline Is February 28

Meet Arlene Allen (Continued from page 1)

other farm animals.

"It's awesome," is the way she described it.

But retirement hasn't come quite yet. She's still working for her old company—long distance—as its interim financial controller. Arlene enjoys music, sewing, and traveling, especially to see her far-flung family, which includes three grandsons. One of her daughters lived in Australia for over a decade (before returning to the West Coast) and Arlene has visited there many times. So, for both Arlene and Susan, there may be a lot of travel on tap when retirement does come.

She also likes bicycling, a mode of transportation that should keep her a little closer to home for the time being. But she won't be biking alone. She and Susan each received a bicycle under their tree for Christmas.

If you haven't already done so, please introduce yourself and give Arlene a big welcome when you see her. You are in for a treat.



FPC's **Lily Selvaggi** and some of her friends performed as a woodwind quintet on Feb. 3 at the Texas School Solo & Ensemble competition. They came away with a superior rating and are advancing to the state completion in May.

That is great news, but here is the rest of the story from Lily:

FPC's **Jim Deaton** was the ensemble's mentor, meeting with them and helping them not only improve their playing, but improving some of their instruments.

"We really couldn't of performed so well without his direction," she said.

In addition to Lily on flute, the group (pictured above) consisted of **Bailey Guinessey** on oboe, **Kevin Horn** on clarinet, **Raquel Medrano** on bassoon, and **Grace Tolly** (*girlfriend of FPC's **Mason Howard***) on French horn.



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As president of C-CAP (Commerce Community Action Program), FPC's **Bob Johnson** is a popular person He was pictured in the Jan. 25 edition of *The Commerce Journal* accepting a donation for \$500 from the Knights of Columbus (Council #16202) for C-CAP's Commerce Institute for the Arts for its summer arts program.

Date and Venue Change for May Grace Presbytery Meeting

If you attend some of the Grace Presbytery Stated meetings, we are giving you an early notice of a change. Please mark it on your calendar. The May Stated Presbytery Meeting will not be held Saturday, May 5, in Fort Worth. The correct, new information for the May meeting is:

Saturday, May 19, 2018

First Presbyterian Church, Richardson

271 Walton St, Richardson, TX 75081



Upcoming Bible Readings for the Next Two Sundays

This Sunday (February 18) Is the First Sunday in Lent

Old Testament: Genesis 9:8-17 *The Covenant with Noah*

Psalter: Psalm 25:1-10 *Prayer for Guidance and Delivery*

Epistle: 1 Peter 3:18-22 *Suffering for Doing Right*

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15 *The Baptism of Jesus / The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry*

Next Sunday (February 25) Is the Second Sunday in Lent

Old Testament: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 *The Sign of the Covenant*

Psalter: Psalm 22:23-31 *Plea for Deliverance from Suffering and Hostility*

Epistle: Romans 4:13-25 *God's Promise Realized through Faith*

Gospel: Mark 8:31-38 *Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection*



Robes and Slippers Gaining Momentum

The Mission/Evangelism Committee is leading a church-wide effort to collect new or gently used robes and slippers for use at Kindred Hospice in Greenville.

The latest contributions came from Jane Cox, who was persuaded to have her picture taken to help publicize the effort.



Assisting with Worship

The following people are assisting with worship the next two Sundays.

February 18

Head Usher: **Barbara Tucker**

Candle Lighter: **TBD**

Liturgist: **Keith McFarland**

February 25

Head Usher: **Monty Howard**

Candle Lighter: **TBD**

Liturgist: **Toni Deaton**

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.

Grace eNews

Read the latest Grace eNews, the newsletter of Grace Presbytery by clicking [here](http://www.gracepresbytery.org), or go to www.gracepresbytery.org.

Additions to Prayer List

We've had some additions to the FPC Prayer List since our last newsletter.

● **The family of Larry Tracy.** Larry is the uncle of FPC's Wally Tucker. He had been on our list and was in hospice care, but he recently passed away. Please pray for his family members.



● **Bob Wilkins.** Bob is the husband of a friend of Susan Reeves. He suffered a heart attack in January that left him with extensive heart damage.

Please pray for all those (and their families) on our list.

In Our Prayers at First Presbyterian

Our Troops

Melba Blount

Gayle Shumate

Preston Helton

Bennie Neve

Jackie Book

Larry Ratliff

Joyce Isaacs

Family of Judy Vanderpool

Family of Janice Hale

Family of Richard Fulkerson

Gordon Hunter

Amy Lopez

Gladys Gray

Loretta Kibler

Ron Davis

Martha and Dan Reynolds

Martha Clevenger

Jim Calvert

Adele Reeves

Family of Madeline Sullivan

Family of Larry Tracy

Bruce Campbell

Joe Yeakley

Mildred Miller

Donald R. Smith

Jan Burns

Ruth Green

Jack Gray

Deryl McKenzie

Jordan and Clelie Senne

Sara Grace Pullen

Grace Byrd

Gaye Furry

Catherine King Robertson

Dub Holcomb

Audrey Hucks

Jean Angotti

Tammi Fucci

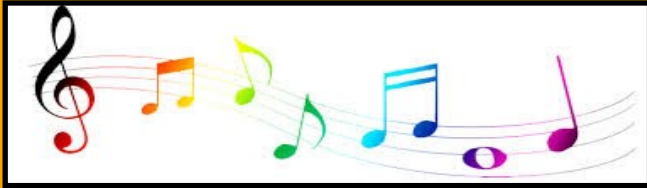
Family of Jackie Lair

Brandon and Kate Pullen Hall

Bob Wilkins

February Hymn of the Month

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A Change in Suggested Food Pantry Donation Items

The Commerce Food Pantry typically serves between 30-40 different families in need each week—over 120 families each month. Donations remain an important source of its ability to help these people. Remember to help out the food pantry with a donation of food each Sunday.

Because the Commerce Food Pantry is now getting some of the items it formerly suggested as donations from the North Texas Food Bank, that list of suggestions has changed to some items it does not get from NTFB.

1st Sunday—Saltine crackers

2nd Sunday—Ranch Style Beans

3rd Sunday—Spaghetti sauce (in cans)

4th Sunday—Spam, chili without beans

5th Sunday—Canned pineapple

In addition to the above, the Commerce Food Pantry is always in need of grocery paper bags with handles (Braum's paper bags are perfect). If you have any spare paper bags, please consider donating them at any time.

Get Smarter with Your Smart Phone

If you are like a lot of people, your smart phone can be intimidating. FPC's Lily Selvaggi can help simplify your relationship with your smart phone and improve your ability to get more out of this complicated, but vital, device.



Lily will conduct a class on smart phone usage in Fellowship Hall on Mar. 8 at 10:30 a.m. Look for more information in our next newsletter, but mark your calendar now so you don't miss out on this learning opportunity.

Hurricane Response Update from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

Greetings in the Light,

This past fall, three hurricanes battered parts of the Caribbean and Gulf Coast regions. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria brought violent winds and severe flooding, and their rapid succession left many people and relief organizations overwhelmed. Your faithful and generous support, however, allowed the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to respond with the light of hope in the midst of chaos, through the work of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). **Thank you for your support.**

Your gifts provided emergency funding in Texas, Florida, Cuba and Puerto Rico. In the days after each storm, PDA was on the ground, assessing damage, providing expert support, partnership, consultation and coordination. Impacted congregations received urgent assistance to continue in ministry to their affected neighbors. PDA's response is widening, providing resources for long-term recovery, working with partners to set up volunteer rebuilding opportunities, supporting capacity building and providing support and training for leaders in Compassion Fatigue and Resiliency. Fatigue and hopelessness often cause a second crisis long after the winds subside and the waters recede.

Historic support from Presbyterians ensured a swift response. In Florida, decades of work in partnership and capacity building with the Florida

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Hurricane Response Update *(Continued from page 5)*

PDA Network (FLAPDAN) meant that preparation and coordination began before Irma made landfall. Collaboration with presbyteries in Texas provides coordination of disaster response efforts. Ongoing support from Presbyterians means that long-term redevelopment is accomplished as the love of Christ is made visible in all of the affected areas.

Nowhere is the need so pronounced as in Puerto Rico. Throughout the island, the loss of homes, infrastructure and loved ones has touched almost every resident. Many months later, thousands of people still lack electricity and running water. Your support is delivering the light of hope into the darkness of the disaster. From the aid and cleanup on the island, to support for presbyteries in Florida and New England as they receive many Puerto Ricans displaced by the devastation, to long-term rebuilding and development, your gifts have made the church's response possible. Because of your support, PDA is able to support a coordinator for relief and development efforts in Puerto Rico from the Puerto Rican Presbyterian community. This important step ensures that the work done by the church will be delivered efficiently and effectively and will build capacity should future disasters strike the U.S. territory.

Thank you for sharing the Light with those in need by standing in the "GAP" — Give. Act. Pray.

Give:

You have been so generous to us and we thank you. You can continue to support Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's emergency response and long-term recovery work through participation in **One Great Hour of Sharing**. This Special Offering secures PDA's capacity to respond to these and other disasters.

Act:

Contact the PDA Call Center and organize a work team. Call (866) 732-6121 or email pda.callcenter@pcusa.org. Work teams will be needed in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico to assist in cleanup and rebuilding efforts.

Ensure your congregation has materials to support One Great Hour of Sharing. PDA and its partner ministries, the Presbyterian Hunger Program and Self-Development of People, are able to share the love of Christ with those in need because of widespread church support through One Great Hour of Sharing. If you have questions, need help or want to start receiving this offering at your congregation, email specialofferings@pcusa.org.

Pray:

God our Light,

Be a strong presence in the lives of neighbors who, having survived the winds and rains, now follow the light of your love toward recovery and rebuilding. Thank you for the generous response of the church. May these gifts of support overflow more than floodwaters, to grow your work of healing and rebuilding and bring comfort and strength to those who suffer. *Amen.*

For more information, visit presbyterianmission.org/pda.

In the Light,



The Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus
Director, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance