



The Presbyterian Courier

First Presbyterian Church of Ada, Oklahoma

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To Witness for God in the World

Advent 2017



TO REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

Gayla Cook; Jane Baltimore; Sunshine Bush; Avery Anderson; the victims of hurricanes and earthquakes, war and poverty; our men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

The church expresses its sympathy and Christian love to younger sister Mary Jean Mayhue, and the whole family of John Richard "Dick" Bayless, who died November 18th, 2017, in Fort Worth, Texas.

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From the Pastor

The Clash of the Religions

Dear Members and Friends,

Let us all rejoice that it is Advent! I would have to say this is probably the most meaningful time of year for me (maybe for you too?). It is one of my favorite times in the church year.

For, you know, we have invented a wonderful, new religion. Not just we have, but people all around the world have. In fact, really, at this time, there is pretty much something like one world religion.

Astonishing! For the first time in human civilization, from Asia to South America to Europe, there is one world religion. We live in a momentous age.

At its best, this religion is so wonderful, that all we want to do is participate in it, and entirely so. It’s like being immersed in an ocean of wonderful-ness, it is so wonderful, and alluring.

What is this one, new, worldwide religion that we have invented, you ask? Well, no one has yet come up with a name that everyone can agree upon. Everyone agrees that there is one, new, worldwide religion...we just haven’t come up with the name yet.

So, we can only describe it. What is it?

Well, let’s start here. It is the miracle that with employment, hard work, and self-sacrifice, we can gain money. And, it is the miracle that with money, we can pretty much purchase and consume, well, *anything*. Well, anything within reason. Some folks are satisfied with a bag of rice; others are satisfied with a pair of shoes; others want to buy a coat or a car or a sofa or a yacht. And they can do so.

Maybe Consumerism is the name of this one, new, worldwide religion that we have invented. Religions, you know, deal with matters of “ultimate concern”. The ultimate concerns of this new religion are: how much stuff, and how much comfort, and how much pleasure, we can acquire for ourselves.

Like I say, I participate in this religion entirely. Don’t get me wrong; I am whole-hog *in*. You wouldn’t believe how many bags of rice and pairs of shoes I have purchased either for me or for

my loved ones. Or, to provide one of ten thousand additional examples...I have children that need “device upgrades”. You know what I mean. They are students and youth and young adults. For a number of reasons they need devices; and so, every few years they need device upgrades. (Me, too.) Some device upgrades might be under the tree this year.

To continue to describe this new religion we would have to include **family, home, hearth, food, and football**. You know, all the wonderful things that we do around the time of December 24th through January 1st. Again, don't get me wrong; I love these things! How much I look forward to these things! Like I say, I am whole-hog *in*. Can there be anything wrong with any of this? I hope not. This is what I do.

This is what you do, too.

And yet, as a theologian, as a pastor, as *your* pastor, as a minister of Word and Sacrament, as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), I have to say, **watch out**. I have to say, watch out, new and invented religions really aren't religions.

This is religion. This is what I am praying, studying, teaching, and preaching this Advent. It is the awesome, astounding, magisterial, marvelous, wild, and wondrous thought, that, in the incarnation of God Almighty in Jesus of Nazareth, God decides that God doesn't only want *our service*, but God wants *to serve us*. Will serve us. Does serve us. Loves, us.

Can you even imagine it?

Now, that is religion. And I have to say, much as I love family, home, hearth, food, football, and consumerism, this is what I really love. God in Christ wants to serve us...as much as we are meant to serve God. The implications for how we live our lives, day to day, are enormous.

Will you join me again this Advent and Christmastide to explore this heart of our faith? Who knows, maybe it leads us to football, and to buying things. Maybe it does. At least, if it makes our children and grandchildren happy. But I want my children and yours to know the true meaning of Christmas. Which is, God arrives to gives God's self to us.

So, yes, Advent is a very meaningful time. Perhaps we would say that it is the time of the clash of the religions. Make a choice with me on what is best.

And, see you soon!

Scott

Events

Recurring Events - Sundays

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Church School for All Ages | 9:30am |
| Worship Service | 10:45am |
| Children's Church | <i>after children's message</i> |



Nursery open and staffed throughout

Recurring Events - Mondays

Yoga Fellowship 6:00-6:45pm

Recurring Events - Wednesdays

Adult Bible Study, upper parlor 6:00pm

Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm

Nursery open and staffed throughout

Coming up in December

Mama T's Bread and Blessings Christmas Tea, home of Jason and Anne Nicole Flinn, 1508 Augusta Dr., Ada Friday, Dec 1, 10am-2pm

FPC serves the Ada High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes lunch Monday, Dec 4, 12:15pm

FPC rings the Salvation Army Bell at Walmart Monday, Dec 4, 9am-4pm

First Midweek Advent Service Wednesday, Dec 6, 6:15pm, sanctuary

FPC serves at Abba's Tables Thursday, Dec 7

Breakfast at JD's Saturday, Dec 9, 8am

Catalyst Class Christmas Party Saturday, Dec 9, 6pm, home of Greta Thompson

Committee Meetings Sunday, Dec 10, following service

PW Bible Study Tuesday, Dec 12, noon, WFC parlor

Second Midweek Advent Service Wednesday, Dec 13, 6:15pm, sanctuary

Children's Christmas Presentation Sunday, Dec 17, in service

Session Meeting Sunday, Dec 17, noon, office

Community service of "Lessons and Carols", FPC sanctuary Sunday, Dec 17, 6pm; nursery open

Third Midweek Advent Service Wednesday, Dec 20, 6:15pm, sanctuary

Christmas Eve Lord's Day Service Sunday, Dec 24, 10:45am

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Sunday, Dec 24, 7pm

Christian Education

The children’s choir sang on November 12 and left the congregation feeling blessed to see their enthusiasm for the love of God. Thank you, Missy Shaw and Bettye Brown, for leading them.

The Children’s Christmas Program will be December 17 during worship service. You are invited to hear their rendition of “It Came to Pass”.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION and CATALYST adult church school classes meet at 9:30am on Sunday mornings. You are invited to join either class.

VOLUNTEERS are needed for children’s church and nursery. This is done on a rotation basis. Even if you can help occasionally, we would appreciate it.

~ Teresa Mayhue, chairperson

Congregational Life and Membership



New Congregational Directory

Friends, look for an email from the church office asking you to review your household contact information, for the purpose of distributing a new congregational directory. This is important for many reasons, especially that we know how to contact each other to be strong in mission and ministry together. Your support is appreciated!

Financial Report

| | October 2017 | YTD | Year Budget | % of Year Budget |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Income | \$11,587.67 | \$146,503.46 | \$160,074.64 | 91.5% |
| Expenses | \$17,820.98 | \$185,236.90 | \$283,456.16 | 65.3% |
| Net | \$(6,233.31) | \$(38,733.44) | \$(123,381.52) | 31.4% |

| Assets | October 2017 | September 2017 | Change |
|--------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| | \$84,971.67 | \$71,425.06 | \$13,546.61 |

Mission and Evangelism

Alternative Gift Market

The Alternative Gift Market on November 12th was a beautiful event. Your generosity constituted the following gifts: Abba's Tables \$300.66; Ada Homeless Services \$300.67; Mama T's Bread & Blessings \$300.67; and Alternative Gifts International \$963.00. In addition, some separate checks went directly to the three local ministries above. Well Done!



Salvation Army

FPC will be ringing the Salvation Army bell at Walmart this Monday, December 4th from 9am to 4pm. Stop by and say hello to the FPC'ers scheduled to serve:

Kurt Jackson, Vestel and Bette Cole, Bruce and Cheryl Weems, Greta and Karah Thompson, Charles and Teresa Mayhue, Bill Brooks and Betty Childers, Scott White and Jo Neman.

Abba's Tables

Thank you Cheryl Weems for leading us in this wonderful ministry! We love that you named the service team the JoAnn Carpenter Team. We want to recognize the following persons who served October 5th:

Carol Peshehonoff, Jo Neman, Betty Childers, Bill Brooks, Linda Wells, Cheryl Weems, Miriam White, Pattie Elliott, Bruce Weems, Robbie Bottoms, Deven Gray, Ashlee Bottoms

And the following people who served on November 2nd:

Bill Brooks, Betty Childers, Linda Wells, Greta Thompson, Nancy Thompson, Kurt Jackson, Seanna Miller, Dezmond Miller, Joanna Gray, Deven Gray, Ashlee Bottoms, Bruce Weems, Cheryl Weems

Meals on Wheels

We want to recognize the following FPC'ers who delivered meals the week of Monday, October 30th through Friday, November 3rd:

Bob and Jo Neman, Carol Peshehonoff, Carolyn Rauch, Leigh Gaddis, Jack Lambert, Deanna Piercy, Mary Hampton, Billie Redden, Jackie Savage, Don Clark, Karah Thompson, Nancy Thompson, Jerry and Dian Malloy.

Compassion Outreach

We want to recognize the following who prepared and/or served the meal at Compassion Outreach on November 14th:

Robbie Bottoms, Vestal & Bette Cole, Becky Compton, Kurt Jackson, Dian and Jerry Malloy, Bob and Jo Neman, Greta Thompson, Karah Thompson, Nancy Thompson, Cheryl Weems.

FPC Mission Emergency Fund

A tank of gas to get the grandkids to Broken Arrow for Thanksgiving family reunion...remediating an electric shutoff for a working man and his disabled wife...a few bucks for stamps and envelopes so an incarcerated Army vet in the Pontotoc County Jail can write his family. These are the kinds of requests for help that come in to the church office all the time. No cash is ever given; full documentation is made for auditing purposes; we log these encounters into the county-wide Charity Tracker system for community-wide coordination of relief efforts. **Thank you for your support.** You can make a contribution at any time to this fund by noting "Mission Emergency Fund" on the memo line.

~ Terry Holman, chairperson

Music Department

On December 17th our church will be hosting a community "Lessons and Carols" service featuring members of our adult choir, professors and students from East Central University, and a composition from local composers Tori Davidson and Rudy Lupinski. It's at 6pm and a reception and fellowship will follow. See you there!

~ Johnna Compton

Session News

October and November Meetings

- *Our own Sarah Thompson has been hired to work in the nursery.*
- *Indian Nations Presbytery is offering funds for special congregational projects for churches who make application. David Butler is our commissioner organizing the application, and Mindy Choate is writing a proposal on our behalf requesting funds for renovating the choir room and offices in the church building.*
- *An action task force has been formed to address the church's financial and structural needs and will report back to the session. David Butler and Terry Holman are co-chairs.*
- *Points of interest for our congregation from the October 6 Stated Meeting of Indian Nations Presbytery held in Duncan were Rick Baggett from Ardmore being moved to the Honorably Retired Roll; receiving of Bill Galbraith from Arkansas Presbytery as an interim pastor to serve*



at Ardmore FPC; the completion of Julie Strong’s tenure as moderator; and installation of Ron Fike as Moderator.

• A huge thank you to Brayden at Dependable Heat and Air. They have done an outstanding job of servicing and replacing our heating and air conditioning units. There was a misunderstanding concerning the cost of the unit in the daycare. The end result was Brayden and Dependable gifted our church \$10,490.00 to cover the disputed amount. Session members sent a thank you note conveying our appreciation.

• Pledge Sunday was November 19. Please prayerfully consider your pledge and turn in your card if you have not already done so.

• Elder of the Month for December is a joint effort.

• Next committee meetings are December 10. .

• The next Session meeting will be December 17 at 12:00 noon in the conference room in Westminster Center.

~ Teresa Mayhue, Clerk of Session

Elders Installed on Session

Class of 2018

Linda Wells, Worship

Vacant

Kay Shaw, Congregational Life and Membership

Amy Elliott, Personnel

BJ Thompson, Worship

Class of 2019

David Butler, Worship

Vacant

Teresa Mayhue, Christian Education

Carolyn Rauch, Stewardship

Terry Holman, Mission and Evangelism

Clerk of Session: Teresa Mayhue

Elder of the Month for December: Combined



Staff

Welcome Laureen Stathes

Hello! My name is Laureen Stathes and I am your new Administrative Assistant / Secretary. I’ve had a chance to already meet some of you in the office and I have been made to feel so welcome; thank you for that. Hope to meet everyone else as time goes by. I am a transplant to Oklahoma by way of Maryland and Texas (and by the way Oklahoma wins for best

sunsets of everywhere I've lived). I worked in Dallas as an Administrative Assistant for several years and after moving to OK I worked for First United Bank. It has only been a few weeks and I already feel like an integral part of the team.

Worship

Midweek Advent Services

You won't want to miss our Wednesday 6:15pm services featuring quiet, peace, scripture, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper...December 6th, 13th, and 20th.

Flowers for the Worship Service

December

Flowers for December will feature Christmas poinsettias. It is not too late to purchase a poinsettia and dedicate it in honor or memory of a loved one.

January

All Sundays available; we'll have a 2018 flower calendar up shortly; contact the church office in the meantime.



Worship attendance, October-to-date

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| October 1 st - 72 | November 5 th - 56 |
| October 8 th - 75 | November 12 th - 81 |
| October 15 th - 69 | November 19 th - 59 |
| October 22 nd - 52 | November 26 th - 41 |
| October 29 th - 67 | |

Birthdays

Happy Birthdays! To:

| | | | |
|------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| Betty Park | Dec 3 | Elliot White | Dec 16 |
| Susan Haney | Dec 5 | Karah Thompson | Dec 19 |
| Dian Maloy | Dec 5 | Jacob Holman | Dec 21 |
| Timothy Butler | Dec 6 | Seanna Bottoms-Miller | Dec 22 |
| Elmer Brown | Dec 8 | Bruce Hall | Dec 22 |
| Lindsey Holman | Dec 8 | Kelley Miller | Jan 1 |
| Bruce Weems | Dec 8 | Arthur Chrissinger | Jan 3 |
| Kai Hampton | Dec 9 | Margaret Barton | Jan 4 |
| Ryan Shaw | Dec 13 | Tami Thompson | Jan 6 |
| Abigail Shaw | Dec 14 | Sally Bennett | Jan 8 |
| Claire Pottebaum | Dec 16 | David Horne | Jan 8 |

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Margot Sweatt | Jan 10 |
| Betty Childers | Jan 12 |
| Scott Robertson | Jan 14 |
| Craig Rauch | Jan 17 |
| Mary Hampton | Jan 18 |
| Charles Peaden | Jan 22 |

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Ellie Wainscott | Jan 25 |
| Scott Carpenter | Jan 26 |
| Jaxen Pippenger | Jan 27 |
| Peyton Cantrell | Jan 30 |
| Richard Mayhue | Jan 31 |

Wedding Anniversaries

Happy Anniversaries! To:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bill and Donna Britt | December 14 th |
| Tom and Mary Hampton | December 27 |
| Todd and Mendy Robson | January 16 |
| Bud and Ruth Morgan | January 23 |
| Elmer and Bettye Brown | January 25 |
| Roy and Margaret Lillard | January 25 |
| Vestel and Bette Cole | January 29 |



Thank You!

Thank you to Terry and Brooke Holman who worked very hard to offer the Alternative Gift Market on November 12th! Thank you to the whole Alternative Gift Market organizing team!

Odds and Ends

FPC has a new web site. It is fpcada.org

With each newsletter we'll feature a couple new things that you can do with the new site, to further the mission, ministry, and fellowship of the congregation.

Church Calendar

You can look at the church calendar on the calendar page. This is the latest, greatest, always-up-to date information. We'll still post the congregational calendar on the bulletin board in Westminster Fellowship Center hall, but now you can see it at your breakfast table. We are posting public events only; we'll maintain a



separate calendar for non-public things. But most of the events at FPC are public—intended for the members, friends, and community to see.

Sunday Bulletins

You can see the Sunday bulletin on “The Service” page. What hymns are we singing this Sunday? Who’s on the prayer list? Each week we post the Sunday bulletin (when it is finished in the office on Thursday or Friday) and it is uploaded there.

Volunteers in Christ Always Needed

Here are some opportunities to serve:

on a committee (Christian Education, Congregational Life and Membership, Mission and Evangelism, Worship, Stewardship, and Personnel);

teach a church school class: nursery through adult.

in the Sunday morning worship service (acolyte, greeter, usher, liturgist, choir member, children’s message).

Just let the church office know and we will connect you with the right team.

First Presbyterian Church

301 East Kings Road

Ada, Oklahoma 74820

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Advent 2017

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First Presbyterian Church Staff

Laureen Stathes, Administrative Assistant

Bonita Blackburn, Organist/Pianist

Johnna Compton, Music Director

Vacant, Director of Youth and Family
Ministries

Tom Hampton, Interim Treasurer

Lele LaFleur & Sarah Thompson, Nursery
Caregivers

Karah Thompson, Custodian

The Rev. Scott M. White, Pastor