



First Presbyterian Church

Tidings

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

910 N WASHINGTON AVE | LIVINGSTON, TEXAS | 77351

DECEMBER 2019

LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

In Nepal, where blindness is prevalent due to under-funded medical care and a lack of eye doctors, ophthalmologist Sanduk Ruit has made it his mission to treat poor people. He's performed more than 130,000 cataract surgeries to restore sight, sometimes walking for a week with surgical equipment in tow to reach patients. Dr. Ruit also found a way for replacement lenses to be made locally for less than \$3 each, rather than buying them internationally for 100 times as much. The physician brings

healing to remote villages and celebrates "big eye-opening festivals" with people who "were blind yesterday, and ... are seeing today."

At Christmas we celebrate the Word of God who came to live among us as Jesus, the light of the world. In countless ways since, God has brought light to those living in literal or figurative darkness.

We celebrate people, such as Dr. Ruit and the 650 doctors he has trained, whom God uses to cause "light [to shine] in the darkness" (John 1:5).

WILD HOPE

What keeps the wild hope of Christmas alive year after year in a world notorious for dashing all hopes is the haunting dream that the child who was born that day may yet be born again even in us.

—Frederick Buechner

Church Events

- Dec 1st - Communion Service; Deacons Meeting after the Service, FH
- Dec 2nd – Mission Committee Meeting, 11 a.m., Activity Building
- Dec 4th – Worship Committee Meeting, 10 a.m., FH, Rm. 2
- Dec 8th – Fellowship Luncheon after the Service, FH
- Dec 9th – PW Circle Meeting, 1:30 p.m., FH
- Dec 12th – Session Meeting, 5:30 p.m., FH, Rm. 2
- Dec 15th – Christmas Interlude, 10 a.m. Service
- Dec 20th – *Tidings* articles due
- Dec 22nd – Christmas Joy Offering
- Dec 24th – Christmas Eve Communion Service, 5 p.m.
- Dec 25th – Christmas Day; Church Office Closed through Friday, Dec 27th

TREBLE CLEF

Mark your calendars for December 15th. The choir will present a concert of Christmas music at the gathering.

The music for December will consist of Christmas carols. I know you will enjoy singing them. Most of these are sung once a year, so don't miss out.

On a personal note, I want to thank each member of this church for the prayers and encouragement that went out for me after my accident. It was very much appreciated.

Jo Ann Hogg,
Music Director

Music Rehearsal Schedule:

Wednesdays:

- Back Row Boys, 4:30 p.m.
- God's Pearls, 5:00 p.m.
- Choir Practice, 5:30 p.m.


Sundays:

- Choir Practice, 9:40 a.m.

?? ? **Bible Quiz** ? ?

Where did the child Jesus and his parents flee for safety?

A. Ethiopia
B. Syria
C. Rome
D. Egypt



Answer: D (See Matthew 2:13.)

Welcome, Jesus!

Welcome all wonders in one sight,
Eternity shut in a span,
Summer in winter, day in night,
Heaven in earth, and God in man,
Great little one,
whose all-embracing birth
Lifts earth to heaven,
stoops heaven to earth.

—Richard Crashaw (1612-1649)



+Christian Symbol+

Holly

Holly was first used by pagans to decorate for the festival of Saturnalia. When Christians began celebrating Christmas in honor of Christ,



they adapted that decorating practice to reflect Jesus' life and death. Holly's pointed leaves symbolize the crown of thorns and its red berries symbolize Christ's blood shed on the cross. Because holly thrives and its berries retain their brilliance even in harsh winter conditions, non-Christians saw it as a symbol of eternity — which is fitting for Christians as well.



**FROM OUR
PASTOR**

It's Not Over 'Til I Win

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" -Romans 8:37

Several years ago I heard a story told by a motivational speaker known as Les Brown. He recounted a time when he was playing a table game with his seven year old son. Les said that even though he tried to let his son win, the boy was so inept at the game that he kept losing over and over again. Feeling bad for his son but not wanting him to feel that he was only a loser, Les sensitively said, "Why don't we stop for now and pick the game up again later?" His son's reply was amazing and became the title of a speech and later a book that Les wrote. The boy simply said, "No, Dad, it is not over 'til I win." What an amazing statement. On first blush, we might say that the kid was so spoiled that life couldn't go on until he got his own way. A deeper reading of the statement has amazing application to our lives as God's children. Before we knew Christ through faith we were all like Les' boy; all we could do was lose. We were losers, not just because we were inept at the game of life, but because of the curse, it was impossible for us or anyone to even approach winning.

However, the work of Christ and our choice to receive Him by faith changed everything. We don't have to wait 'til it is all over (meaning Christ's second coming). We are winners now because He won then (at the Cross). Oh, there are times when we don't feel much like winners and we only feel defeated. Don't let that lie from the Enemy control your life. If you know Christ by faith you are not only a winner but a conqueror, as Paul says in Romans. It also changes the statement from "it's not over 'til I win" to "because Jesus won, it's all over"

Blessings, Pastor Joe MacDonald

A MONTH OF MISSIONS

We thank you for your donations of \$281 for the Peacemaking Special Offering; from this \$70 was sent to help My Father's House serve those in need. It is located near-by at the Life Vine Church and gives daytime assistance. Our next Special Offering is set for Dec. 22nd, which is the Joy Offering benefiting retired UPUSA ministers/workers.

Did you know that we are one of the few churches supporting the Revival Food Pantry in Onalaska? In October they served 186 families with a total of 559 individuals. On Oct. 31st several Mission folks joined Pastor Joe at the Assembly of God's festival: he distributed at least 150 balloon creatures assisted by Kerry Wheeler, Nina Dobyms, Donna Swanson, Doug Palmer, Bonnie Laverty, and myself.

Our November shoebox event resulted in 28 wrapped boxes going to the seamen at the Port of Houston. With respect to children, after talking with the Beckers, we will be sending most of our collected items to Guatemala in time for them to sort and bag prior to Christmas. Thanks to all who donated to both programs.

We are looking to participate again in the Empty Stocking program, but no specific details at this time.

Our next meeting is set for December 2nd, with special guests Keith and Maria Becker.

Chuck Davidson, Mission Chair

The Promise of the Future

A nursing home resident who longed for fresh Georgia peaches discovered a pit overlooked in his serving of canned fruit. In an old coffee can, he planted the stone, which sprouted! The man gave the small tree to friends to plant. Years later, the peaches were so abundant the

neighbors had to give some away.

Lila Docken Bauman recounts this story for the Christian Century, saying the man who took that gamble “did not live to see [it] grow into the tree that ultimately produced this harvest. But when he looked at that pit years

ago he saw the promise of fresh fruit. ... ‘Who despises the day of small things?’ asks the prophet Zechariah. It’s in those small things that the promise of the future rests.”

Just so, some 2,000 years ago, in a small baby born in a tiny town — both seemingly inconsequential — rested “the promise of the future” — the salvation of the whole world.



**PRODUCE FRUIT
IN KEEPING WITH
REPENTANCE.**

MATTHEW 3:8, NIV

Coming Attraction

Advent, which marks the beginning of the church year, is “the first gleam of Christmas,” writes W.E. Sangster. “It heralds the entrance of the Divine into human history; it is heaven descending to earth; it is a great event casting its brilliance before it.” Sangster adds: “It is as though a trumpeter had



taken his stand upon the turrets of time and announced the coming of the King. ‘Get ready,’ he seems to say. ‘Get ready. He is coming!’”

“Be born in us today”

In 1865, Phillips Brooks, an Episcopal preacher from Boston, went on a Holy Land pilgrimage. Riding horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem for Christmas Eve worship at the Church of the Nativity was so moving that he wrote “O Little Town of Bethlehem.” The hymn’s final stanza addresses the town’s most famous newborn:

*O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

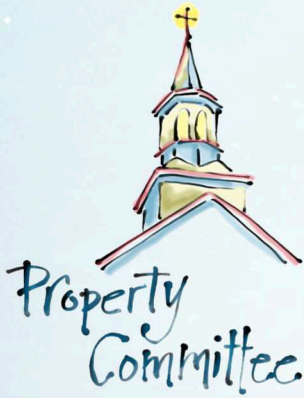
All women of the Church are welcome on December 9, at 1:30 p.m., in Room 2 of the Fellowship Hall, for our last lesson of 2019. Bring Your Friends! Our fourth lesson will be *Love Carved in Stone – Words of Love: Honor the Life-givers*. We are continuing to look at the Ten Commandments this year.

The sign-up sheet to host snacks after our meetings (starting with January 2020) will be there in December so everyone can have a chance to help. We will also need to finalize the details of our Mission Lunch on January 12th.

December hosts are Karen Palmer and Carol Gunter

Call Beverly Davidson (936-969-3277/713-417-4958) or Bonnie Laverty (713-557-0410) with any questions.





When believers please the Lord constantly, that is their Christian walk. When they produce fruit consistently, that is their Christian work. When they progress in knowledge continually, that is their Christian wisdom. When they persevere in stress cheerfully, that is their Christian welfare. When they praise God correctly, that is their Christian worship.

-Colossians 1:10-12. DJBS

Maintenance items:

1. Replaced Reverse osmosis filters F.H. kitchen.
2. Had Andries Electrical install new battery/ backup ballast in hall security light of F.H. (Replacing the one that caught fire)
3. Installed new track lights in Sound/Audio booth, better light control.
4. Had sprinkler system winterized.
5. Broken Arrow pest control did quarterly extermination.
6. Insulated outside faucets.
7. Replaced A/C filters.
8. Beverly Davidson planted more irises along east side of Act. Bldg.
9. Replaced leaking water supply line to dishwasher. (Thank you Mary Lou Anderson and Beverley Davidson for contacting maintenance about leak).

Audio/Sound

I want to thank those who have volunteered to work the audio system on Sundays. Those of you who expressed your willingness to work the audio system contact Robin Sessums at 936-327-8381 to schedule a training of the system.

Robin has been doing a great job in organizing the worship service with Pastor Joe MacDonald.

People who take God's Word seriously don't just read it to see what it says: they make it a map for life so they can learn what to do---and then they do it.

Glenn Drumm, Property Chair



**CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION**

All classes are holding their own, but what we are aiming for is to reach more people for the Lord.

We are still praying for some that we were hoping to reach from the Hallelujah Harvest. However,

God is still in control and blessing the classes we have. If you have not tried a class, you will be blessed by visiting one (or more).

We are looking forward to seeing our kids' class as they will be helping with our Christmas dramas next month. The dramas are scheduled for December 15. You won't want to miss this. Invite someone to come with you, especially children who will enjoy the drama.

We will have a Christmas party after the drama for the children.

Yours in God's work,
Kerry Wheeler



Celebrate!



- Chris & Katie Longoria, 12/27
- Carol Gunter, 12/09
- Marjorie Tolls, 12/12
- David Sessums, 12/14
- Harry Bristol, 12/29
- Georgina Drumm, 12/30
- Ruth Dominy, 12/31

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The December Fellowship Luncheon will be a Christmas Brunch. The Fellowship Committee will prepare casseroles. We are asking the congregation to bring their favorite Christmas dishes.

The January Luncheon will be done by the PW ladies with their annual feast.

I will schedule another meeting for the Fellowship Committee for some time in mid-January.

Thanks to all who helped us with the cleaning up after our November luncheon.

Jo Pavey, Fellowship Chair

LET'S CONNECT!



Online:
www.fpclivingston.com

Email:
fpc@fpclivingston.com

Phone: (936) 327-8381

Our Sunday Schedule

- "Signs of the Times" Class - 8:45 a.m., FH, Rm. 2
- Kid Zone - 9:00 a.m., Rm. 202, AB
- Middle School - 9:00 a.m., Rm. 206, AB
- Adult Bible Study - 9:00 a.m., FH, Rm. 1
 - Worship - 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary
 - Nursery available for children ages infant through 4