

# First Presbyterian Church

## Tidings

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | 910 N WASHINGTON AVE | LIVINGSTON, TEXAS | JANUARY 2020

## A PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY

The following prayer, almost 1,000 years old, was written for pilgrims walking the Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James) — 500 miles across northern Spain. Use this adaption as you journey into the new year:

God, you called your servant Abraham from Ur in Chaldea, watching over him in all his wanderings, and guided the Hebrew people as they crossed the desert. Guard your children, who seek to grow in you this year. Be their companion on the

way, their guide at the crossroads, their strength in weariness, their defense in dangers, their shelter on the path, their shade in the heat, their light in the darkness, their comfort in discouragement, and the firmness of their intentions. Through your guidance, may they be enriched with grace and virtue, and be filled with salutary and lasting joy.

—from the 12th-century *Codex Calixtinus*

## AT HOME WITH GOD

Of all persons, the Christian should be best prepared for whatever the New Year brings. ... In Christ he has disposed of a thousand enemies that other men must face alone and unprepared. He can face his tomorrow cheerful and unafraid because yesterday he turned his feet into the ways of peace and today he lives in God. The man who has made God his dwelling place will always have a safe habitation.

—A.W. Tozer



## Church Events

- Jan 1<sup>st</sup> - New Year's Day; Church Office closed
- Jan 5<sup>th</sup> – Communion Sunday
- Jan 6<sup>th</sup> – Mission Meeting, 11 a.m., Activity Building
- Jan 9<sup>th</sup> – Joint Session Meeting of Elders and Deacons, 5:30 p.m., FH, Rm. 2
- Jan 12<sup>th</sup> – PW Mission Lunch after the Service, FH; Study Task Force Meeting after the Luncheon
- Jan 13<sup>th</sup> – Presbyterian Women's Circle Meeting, 1:30 p.m., FH
- Jan 17<sup>th</sup> – *Tidings* articles due
- Jan 25<sup>th</sup> – Men's Breakfast Meeting, 8:30 a.m., FH

# STUDY

## TASK FORCE

At the November Session Meeting, the creation of a study group composed of church members to review our current leadership and committee structures was approved. This task force will convene in January to review whether our current number of Elders and Deacons (nine each) need to be changed

(increased, decreased, eliminated or left alone) along with a look at our nine committees (add, decrease, eliminate one or more or leave alone). Input will be gathered from comparable Presbyterian churches as well as from you. Session gave me permission to have two active Elders, two active Deacons along with three

to five members at large, effective this January, to serve. At this time, the following have agreed to serve: Elders Chuck Davidson and Paul Laverty, Deacons Shona Heredia and Patty Harrell, members at large: Hershel Mackey, Doug Palmer, Robin Sessums and Janet Linn. Serving as advisory members will be our Pastor and the Clerk of Session.

Our first meeting will follow the second Sunday luncheon in January, on the 12th, in

Room 2 of the Fellowship Hall. I envision our "work" to take up most of 2020, with any possible recommendations effective in 2021 if approved by Session. I ask that you pray for us as we begin this process.

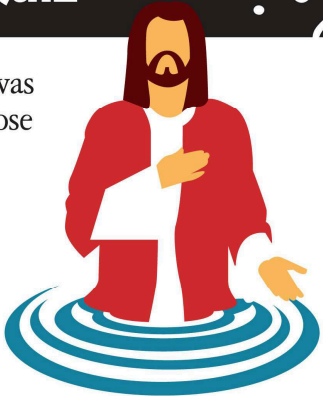
Chuck Davidson, Chair



**Bible Quiz**

According to Matthew, who was present at Jesus' baptism? (Choose as many as apply.)

- A. John the Baptist
- B. The Spirit of God
- C. Jesus' mother, Mary
- D. His first disciples



Answer: A and B (See Matthew 3:13-17.)

## Christian Education

Right now our committee is trying to rearrange the Sunday School classes so there will be a class to cover each age group, starting in January. We still need teachers, so please contact me or one of our committee members if you or someone you know would like to serve as teacher for one of our classes.

Our library will have new devotional books. If you are interested, please check it out and see if there's one you might like.

Kerry Wheeler, Christian Education Chair

## +Christian Symbol+

### Cross on the Rock



The rock is often used as a symbol of the Lord, our strength and firm foundation.

A cross rising from the rock echoes many Bible verses that proclaim Christ as the rock of salvation; for example, "He alone is my rock and my salvation ..." (Psalm 62:2, ESV).

**HE** HAS REMOVED OUR SINS  
AS FAR FROM US AS

THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST.

Psalm 103:12, NLT





FROM OUR  
**PASTOR**

## ENDINGS ARE THE BEGINNING OF BEGINNINGS

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” -Jeremiah 29:11*

Isn't it interesting that the beginning of the ministry of Christ in His birth is almost simultaneously involved (at least on the western calendar) with the ending of another year of life and work. And isn't it also interesting that the ending of another year of life and work signals the beginning of a new year with new possibilities, experiences and events both positive and negative.

Emotionally we experience sadness when anything that is positive ends. It may be the end of the life of a loved one or the end of a career that has provided fulfillment and sustenance for a family. It may be the end of a marriage in divorce or the end of a relationship with a loved one because of dementia or Alzheimer's, which can cause complete loss of recognition. It may be the loss of a building or a landmark that has been the focus of many memories for generations of people. For example, I have a friend who, years ago, purchased a landmark home owned by the historical society of that particular county. He promised the society that he would restore the home to as close an approximation to its original state as possible. He noticed, as he was in the process of restoration that older people in the community who “knew what it was when” would pass by and watch the progress with smiles on their faces and even tears of joy because of the memories connected with it.

Here is the reality of endings, they always give birth to some kind of beginning. The ending of Jesus' earthly ministry was the beginning of a whole new paradigm of redemption for mankind. The ending of earthly life signals the beginning of an eternal life (positive or negative in nature but eternal nonetheless). The end of an era or dynasty allows the possibility of a new one. We live our lives with a focus on what was because that is known. We hesitate to focus on the possibilities of the future because that is what is unknown. The above verse can be our theme individually for ourselves and our church as we step into a new year. God does have a wonderful plan as we move ahead but it only happens when we see the ending of one year as the doorway to the new one.

Blessings, Pastor Joe MacDonald



Your Mission Committee of 2019 thanks you for your continued support and prays that we all can continue helping to serve others both near and far. You have donated generously to the four (PC)USA special offerings, to the collection of shoes and socks for KFCE, to gifts for a family in need, with non-perishable foods for the Center of Hope and Revival food pantries, plus shoebox items for our seamen and children in Guatemala, and of course those organizations we support with funds ranging from the local Habitat for Humanity, GODTEL, SAAFE House, KFCE, Imagination Library, Keep a Kid in School, Hechos Dos, the Pan American School, and the PCHS program, as well as many others. See the updated listing on the Mission bulletin board in the narthex.

Mission will meet on Monday, Jan. 6th, at 11 a.m., in the office area of the Activity Building. Anyone may attend as this will be our kick-off meeting for the year. We will review our calendar and determine which projects we might want to participate in this year; we are also open to new members.

My heartfelt thanks to all who have helped us in the past and God willing, can continue to do so in the future. My special thanks to committee members: Beverly Davidson, Bonnie Laverty, Doug and Karen Palmer, Ron Tolls, and Susie Nobles, plus Pastor Joe whose support and input we value. I am blessed to have such a strong group to work with.

Chuck Davidson, Mission Chair



# TREBLE CLEF

## MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD!

Thank you, choir, for the awesome job on our musical December 15th. Keep up the good work. Our year will be 2020!

We invite others to come join us on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m., after the first of the year. We are taking a holiday break now and

will start again on January 8th.

Congregation, we love the way you are singing with us. Please join in on all the hymns.

Jo Ann Hogg, Music Director

## Instruments of Praise

Some innovative musicians play instruments that actually melt at their fingertips. Their ice creations — everything from drums and a pipe organ to harps and didgeridoos — make awe-inspiring sounds (search online to hear for yourself).

The unique challenges posed by dissolving instruments seem to increase their impact. “ICEstruments” sculptor Tim Linhart says concertgoers, whose bodies also are largely composed of water, often feel a “spiritual connection” to the music.

Although people don’t melt, our physical bodies eventually return to ashes and dust. Despite that impermanence, God created us as wonderful instruments to make joyful noises for him: “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!” (Psalm 150:6).

—adapted from *The Wired Word*

## Boxes and More Boxes

Houston Seafarer Chaplains have already received almost 4,000 Christmas Boxes to gift to seafarers on the ships coming into the Port of Houston during December, but they are looking forward to receiving another 6,000 to 7,000 more boxes in the next couple of weeks.

Chaplains take the boxes to every ship coming into the port, with one box per seafarer. This is a monumental undertaking involving hours of stacking, bagging, loading their cars and trucks, hauling the bags of boxes to and up the gangways and then doing it again at the next ship.

Why do they do this? They do it for the looks of pure joy and happiness on the faces of crewmen and women on the ships who are far from home and family and won’t see loved ones for several months more. They do this to show the love of the people of Texas for those who serve us so faithfully by bringing the products that every single person uses daily.

If you have filled a box and it has gone to the Seafarer Center, consider filling another one, or two or three. Seafarers of all faiths receive these gifts and

those of other than Christian faiths cannot believe that people would do this for them, even though we and they do not share a common faith.

Reach out, be a blessing and consider the joy that YOUR simple gift will bring to a seafarer from far away.



*Seafarer Center Chaplains with just a few of the Christmas Boxes that have come in. Chaplains expect to distribute between 10,000 and 11,000 boxes this year.*



# PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Happy New Year! All women of the Church and all friends are welcome on January 13, at 1:30 p.m., in Room 2 of the Fellowship Hall for our first lesson of 2020. Our fifth lesson will be *Love Carved in Stone – Words of Love: Don't Kill Each Other*. We are continuing to look at the Ten Commandments this year.

The sign-up sheet to host snacks after our meeting for April will be at this meeting if you have not taken a turn this year. We will go over the results of our Mission Lunch from January 12th prior to our lesson, as well as an end of the year Treasury Report by Jamie.

January hosts are Edna Melton and Beverly Davidson.

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

## January PW Mission Lunch

All church members and guests are invited to attend our Presbyterian Women's Mission Lunch on Sunday, January 12, 2020, after the Worship Service. We will be serving a main dish of taco soup & sausage links along with chips & dip, salads, and desserts.

All food will be provided by the members of PW with a basket for donations. These donations will support our Local Missions of Kids Free Clothing Exchange (60%) and Keep Kids in School (20%), as well as a portion to support PW/Presbytery missions (20%). Last year with the generosity of our members and guest we were blessed with \$485 to share with our missions.

Please plan to join us on SUNDAY, January 12, for a good, warm meal and time for fellowship. Any donations by check should be made out to PW.

Thank you in advance - Presbyterian Women (PW-FPCL)

# My Jesus Loves Me



When day is done and evening is nigh  
I close my eyes and then I sigh  
I don't know what tomorrow will bring  
But this I know and this I sing.

My Jesus loves me that I always know  
He's always with me no matter where I go  
He'll brighten up my day  
He'll chase my blues away  
He picks me up when I am down.

Friends may desert me, leave me all alone  
He's there beside me when all the rest have gone  
He'll drive away my tears  
Love me through all the years  
He'll peel the bonds from round your heart

There were the years when I went astray  
Those times when skies were always gray  
Couldn't find true happiness, couldn't ease the pain  
Couldn't fill the emptiness, never had a gain

My Jesus loves me that I always know  
He's always with me no matter where I go  
He'll brighten up my day  
He'll chase my blues away  
For He's the difference and He's the only way.

- Tommy Fluker





# Celebrate!

## JANUARY Birthdays

## JANUARY Anniversaries

- Leah Vogely, 01/01
  - Edna Black Melton, 01/02
  - Rick Nobles, 01/03
  - Vi Ketterling, 01/07
  - Tabatha Cooper, 01/08
  - Braylon Heredia, 01/15
  - Hershel Mackey, 01/18
  - Rick Nobles, Jr., 01/19
  - Kathy Koman, 01/25
  - Nina Dobyys, 01/26
  - Lee Jones, 01/30
  - Sharon Reid, 01/31
- Larry & Vi Ketterling, 01/07
  - Paul & Bonnie Laverty, 01/18

## QUOTES

“Our hope is not in the new year, but in the One who makes all things new.” —Unknown

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“What a wonderful thought it is that some of the best days of our lives haven’t even happened yet.” —Anne Frank

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“We should work for a world not simply that hates hatred, but that loves love.” —Fr. James Martin, S.J.

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“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.” —Charles Dickens

LET'S CONNECT!



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[www.fpclivingston.com](http://www.fpclivingston.com)

Email:  
[fpclivingston.com](mailto: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