

# First Presbyterian Church



*Mission Statement: In response to God's Power at Work within us, The Weslaco First Presbyterian Church offers hope in Christ through opportunities to learn and serve.*

Dear Friends,

December brings us four weeks of Advent and seven of the twelve days of Christmas. In Advent, we wait and prepare. Many Christians observe Advent as a time of prayer and fasting which may sound strange to our American sensibilities. The Twelve Days of Christmas are a celebration of God's love revealed to us by the Christ Child.

How many Americans want to wait until Christmas to celebrate? We are an anxious people who anticipate events and begin our celebrations sooner and sooner. Seasons creep into each other, not staying in their appointed place on the calendar. We are yearning ahead, anticipating the celebrations, preparing for the next best thing.

Christmas is the very best thing of all because *Christmas satisfies a deep and basic human need to be loved.*

Because Christmas has so many positive images, we exhaust ourselves in trying to get everything right. By the time that December 26<sup>th</sup> is here, we breathe a sigh of relief that it is over until next year. Sick of the music, tired of activities, perhaps disappointed in some aspects of the holiday, we fall into our easy chairs, longing for silence and rest. And yet, Christmas has just begun! There are ELEVEN MORE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS! It is not just a day -- it's a season.

Given how hard we prepare for one day, how could we possibly survive **twelve** days of Christmas? How could we stand that much love, even though we need it?

We need to love and be loved. Yet, no human can give us the love we long for, nor can we love another person so much as to satisfy their need for love. Only God can satisfy and fill that deep ache within us. Because God will not force us to accept this love, we must invite God in. We open ourselves to God's love and acceptance. If we do not, we may find that the Christmas Spirit exhausts us in the best of times and makes us feel sad and isolated during times of grief, just when we need God the most. We may find ourselves saying, "Is that all there is?"

As we prepare our houses, let us also prepare our hearts. This is the purpose of Advent, preparation to receive the Christ who comes. In the dark nights, let the Christmas lights remind you of the love of God. Let the Spirit surround you like a warm blanket, fill you like hot cocoa, and bring you peace and assurance that you are loved. May your heart be as beautiful as your Christmas tree, as fragrant as mulled cider, and piled high with peace. Pause occasionally and let the mystery of this season fill you. The God of all creation loves **YOU!**

May God bless you with a Holy Advent and a Joyous Christmas,



Our **Christmas Cantata** will be presented on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> during worship.



**Children's Christmas Program** will be held December 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Our annual Christmas dinner will be held immediately following the children's program. Everyone is invited to join us!

**Advent** means 'coming,' the coming of God into the world as a small and helpless infant.

**COFFEE GRACES:**

*Savory Perks* on **Wednesday mornings from 7:30-8:30**. Grab a cup of coffee or tea and a muffin. Spend time with Pastor Sonja and some friends.

**COMMUNION & POWER OF HOPE FUND:**

The deacons will continue to take communion to the homebound on the same day that we have it in church. If you know of someone who is homebound and would like communion, let us know by calling the office or informing your deacon.

**The Power of Hope Fund** is used for helping families in need find a sense of hope. This is collected on communion Sundays.

**FELLOWSHIP REGISTERS:**

Thank you for filling out the fellowship registers. We need this for our records.

**BIBLE STUDIES:**

The **Men's Bible Study** and discussion group meets every Tuesday, from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. in the church parlor. We are studying the book Revelation. If you have questions, contact, Tom Newcomer at 956-973-0976.

**STARS OF HOPE:**

We will begin on January 11, 2012 and run through February 29, 2012 for all of our youth from pre-K through high school. If you would like to volunteer in the spring, please contact Roxie Blood.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL:**

We will not have Sunday School for youth or children on December 25 or January 1. We will resume our rotational Sunday School program on January 8. The middle school youth will be at Mo Ranch that weekend so the Sunday morning youth classes will resume on January 15.

**YOUTH GROUP:**

The Youth Group will meet December 4th from 5:30-7:00pm in the fellowship hall. All middle and high school youth are welcome to attend!



**Everyone is invited to go caroling after church on December 18th.** Right after fellowship, we will travel to a few locations, sing season greetings with a song or two and

finish up with a trip to Dairy Queen. All ages are invited to join us. Many voices will help us make a joyful noise!

**CONSUMERS? -- NO!** To God we are SOULS, each one unique and precious. The media may think we exist only to buy things - but that is not true. We were created for love and creativity.

**The Youth still have calendars for 2012.** We would love to sell out soon! The calendars are available each Sunday after church in the Fellowship Hall or in the church office for \$6.00. Profits from the sales go to help the youth with the expenses of attending Mo Ranch mid-winter conferences in January.



**Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Service** will be held December 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to join us.



We will celebrate Jesus' birth with a baby shower during Sunday School on December 18<sup>th</sup>. The children and youth will all meet together to enjoy a celebration complete with the opportunity to decorate their own cupcake. Everyone is asked to bring a baby gift on the 18<sup>th</sup> which will be donated to Su Casa de Esperanza. The gifts will be placed under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary during the worship service.

After Christmas we will take these gifts to our mission at Su Casa de Esperanza. Su Casa serves over 300 families. The moms and moms-to-be who receive these gifts are really grateful.

Some items on the Su Casa wish list are:

- |               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Baby Booties  | Baby Cereal        |
| Baby Clothing | Baby Socks         |
| Baby Shoes    | Onesies            |
| Pacifiers     | Pampers            |
| Wet ones      | Receiving Blankets |
| Diapers       | Bottles            |

**RETREAT OPPORTUNITY**



**Compassionate Evangelism**  
Sharing our Love, Sharing our Faith

**February 19-21, 2012**  
Mo- Ranch Conference Center

Rev. Ray G. Jones, III  
Coordinator for Evangelism,  
General Assembly Mission Council, PC USA

Great opportunity for Adult Sunday School classes and elders and deacons!

For more information and/or registration forms contact the church office.



**THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED:**  
**DECEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>**  
IN OBSERVANCE OF  
CHRISTMAS



[www.facebook.com/fpcweslacotx](http://www.facebook.com/fpcweslacotx)

### You-A Soul

Imagine that you, as a soul, are like a beautiful crystal castle with many rooms inside. The glow that comes from within is that spark of love that is a gift from God's Spirit. As we grow in faith, that spark grows and shines through the crystal walls, showing God's love to the world. Let your light shine this Advent Season! [The image of the soul as a crystal castle comes from The Interior Castle by St. Theresa of Avila (1515-1582.)]

**The Division of Finance provides a monthly report regarding average weekly Sunday service attendance and tithes.**

#### October 2011

Average weekly attendance: 89

Average weekly tithes and offerings: \$3152.60

Average Weekly Expenses: \$ 5900

All financial information is available in the church office.



If you have someone you would like to add to the Prayer Chain for members to pray for, please call (968-6478) or email [janeails@msn.com](mailto:janeails@msn.com) so this person can be added to our list.

#### SHORT TERM LIST

- Thomas January
- Connor Cruz
- Ruth Armstrong
- Randy Petch
- Jennifer McDaniel
- Amy Scott
- Marti Dyrk
- Raul and Carla Leal
- Clyde Pellett
- Casey Damen
- Jerri Lantz
- Sean Moore
- Sharon Newcomer
- Pamela Dueñas
- Jay Tirrel (Shirley Anderson's son)
- Alan Landers (Doris's son-in-law)
- Dawn (Jo Green's daughter)
- Gerardo Mendoza (Ana Maria "Anita's son)
- Gavin & Emily Clutton
- Dan & Betty Roberts (Pastor Sonja's Parents)

#### LONG TERM LIST

- Dora Aldrich
- Melanie Liesner
- Bob Jolma
- Dorothy French
- D J McGroarty
- Chris Anderson
- David Salazar
- Seth Chambers
- Mary Jane Lofton
- Jo Summers
- Beth Moore
- Don Brue
- Bill Cody
- Mary Vinkemulder
- Phil Timmer (Sherri Bagwell's cousin)
- Nancy Smith (Kathy Sornson's sister)
- Clayton Vicars (Linda Kopecky's grandson)
- Lois Alexander (Phyllis Walker's step mom)
- Linda Evans (Bob Ordway's sister)
- Julia Sleeth Mays (Ellen Sleeth's sister)
- Pamela Duffy (Chuck & Kathy's niece)
- Joe Perez Jr (Rudy & Margret's nephew)
- Janet Thompson (Canyon Lake member)
- Orrin & Marilyn Ward
- Johnny Long (Pastor Sonja's friend)
- Joleigh Stephenson Ares
- Ronald Bagwell

#### SHUT INS & FRIENDS

- Juanita Pointer
- Arlene Waughtal
- Delores Rettig
- Juanita Cloninger
- Fran Pellett
- Millie Johansen
- Joe Barbee
- Katie Carter
- Isaac and Doris Botts
- Clint Gebke (Polly Lovell's grandson)
- Mickel Fernández
- Jim Rogers (Jim & Barbara Roger's son)
- Lucas Anderson (Orlen Anderson's grandson)
- Terry Osheim, Jonathon Osheim, Joseph Osheim (Sharon Newcomer's nephews)



#### STATE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

- Eric Whitaker based in Nairobi, Kenya (Carmen Whitaker's son)
- Jonita Whitaker based in Naples, Italy (Carmen Whitaker's daughter-in-law)

### **"Surviving the Holidays" Grief Support Groups**

**These are one night events designed to support you as you go through grief at a time when everyone else seems to be celebrating.**

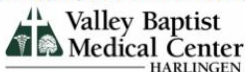
WHEN: Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 6:00 pm (facilitated by Chaplain Chris Hall)

or

Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 6:00 pm (facilitated by Chaplain Teresa Vaughn)

WHERE: Boggus Pavilion Classroom #1 (Harlingen)

Open to the public and free of charge.



# Session Snippets

November 21, 2011

The Session welcomes questions about church activities and asks everyone to pray for our pastor, ruling elders, deacons, congregation, community, and the world at large.

- The 2012 budget was approved.
- Stars of Hope for the children and youth of the church will begin in January and run until Spring Break.
- Planning for Camp Creativity in August of 2012 will begin in January.
- The Pastor Nominating Committee has been meeting at least every two weeks and interviews continue.
- A new dishwasher was purchased and installed.
- Some dates to remember:
  - Nov. 27: Advent Breakfast and family craft project
  - Nov. 27: Potluck Lunch to honor Cheryl Lindstrom after worship
  - Nov. 30: Advent Garden and light supper
  - Dec. 10: Pageant Practice at 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
  - Dec. 11: Christmas Cantata during worship
  - Dec. 11: Christmas pageant and dinner at 5 p.m.
  - Dec. 18: Baby Shower for Jesus to support Su Casa de Esperanza families. Bring baby items to worship
  - Dec. 18: Caroling at 12:15 p.m.
  - Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Service at 5 p.m.
  - Dec. 25: Light refreshments at 10 a.m. with worship at 10:30 a.m. No Sunday School
  - Jan. 1: No Sunday School, no communion
  - Jan. 8: Communion

I thank my God every time  
I remember you.  
[Philippians 1:3]

## Special Thanks To Our Recent Hosts and Musicians

### PIANISTS:

Sherri Bagwell

### ORGANIST:

Jeffery Figueroa

### FLOWER HOSTS:

Seils Family  
Dick Gibson  
Shirley Fisk

### LITURGISTS:

Jennifer Rektorik  
Marvin Miller  
Mary Mattar  
Debby Rektorik

### FELLOWSHIP HOSTS:

Linda Kopecky  
Gibson Family  
Youth Fundraiser

If you would like to donate flowers for worship, or if you would like to be a fellowship host/hostess, you may sign up on charts located in the Fellowship Hall or call the Church Office.



We are so grateful to all our volunteers. They help with the newsletter, in the office, fix things, take care of the yard, set up for worship, help with the youth, prepare Sunday School lessons, help with fellowship, decorate, buy our supplies, change clocks and calendars, sing in the choir, and much much more. It is great to see everyone work together for the Lord. You are appreciated!



## **Environment Committee**

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Let's be good stewards of our environment and re-use what we can!

### **Weslaco Recycling Drop-Off site:**

Public Utilities Building  
1912 Joe Stephens Blvd.  
(located by Weslaco Airport)  
973- 3146

Hours: **Tuesday and Thursday ONLY!**

8:00-12:00; 1:00 – 5:00

- All plastic containers (separate #1 & #2)
- All glass containers
- Paper
- Newspaper
- Magazines
- Books
- Cardboard

**Need Gift Ideas???** How about purchasing some beautiful reusable grocery bags and water bottles for Christmas for those special loved ones? Only \$4.00 each, they serve the dual purpose of spreading God's Hope (they are decorated with a cross) and they also help preserve our environment. They may be purchased after church in Fellowship Hall or at the Church office. Come check them out!!! Profits from these sales will be donated to Su Casa de Esperanza.

Are there things you want to recycle and don't know how? Go to [www.terracycle.net](http://www.terracycle.net)



## **Nova Basic Course**

Crisis Response  
Training

is a 40 hour program preparing community leaders to help groups of affected people cope with their immediate emotional reactions when a crisis strikes their community.

Training covers the techniques of providing crisis intervention. It gives participants fundamentals on crisis and trauma, and how these are filtered through the victim's age and culture to indicate how to adapt the basic techniques to different groups.

### **WHEN:**

January 17, 2012

January 24, 2012

January 31, 2012

February 7, 2012

February 14, 2012

### **TIME:**

(8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)

### **WHERE:**

Boggus Education Pavilion Room 5  
Valley Baptist Medical Center, Harlingen

For more information contact: Pastoral Services,  
VBHS, at 956-389-1194

e-mail: [pastoralservices@valleybaptist.net](mailto:pastoralservices@valleybaptist.net)

### **E-MAIL ADDRESS CHANGE:**



Our internet provider is doing away with hosting e-mail addresses; therefore we are having to make a change. Our new e-mail address will be [fpcweslacotx@gmail.com](mailto:fpcweslacotx@gmail.com) .

Pastor Sonja will be using [sonja.dalGLISH@gmail.com](mailto:sonja.dalGLISH@gmail.com)

## Contact Information:

### Address:

709 S. Iowa Ave.  
Weslaco, TX 78596

### Phone & Fax:

956-969-1535

### Website:

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

### Interim Pastor

Pastor Sonja Dalglish  
[sonja.dalglish@gmail.com](mailto:sonja.dalglish@gmail.com)  
[www.hopetalks.wordpress.com](http://www.hopetalks.wordpress.com)

### Secretary

Connie Leyva  
[fpcweslacotx@gmail.com](mailto:fpcweslacotx@gmail.com)

### Church Office Hours

#### Monday thru Thursday:

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

#### \*Friday:

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Presbytery Website

[www.mission-presbytery.org](http://www.mission-presbytery.org)

### Synod of the Sun Website

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

### PCUSA Website

[www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org)



First Presbyterian Church  
Is a Stephen Ministry  
Congregation

## Officers of FPC

### Session

#### Class of 2011

Nathan Aranda (youth)  
Melissa Jones  
Linda Kopecky  
Mary Mattar  
Eddie Seils

#### Class of 2012

Charles Bell  
David Dueñas  
Debby Rektorik  
Linda Taormina

#### Class of 2013

Camille Jones  
Marvin Miller  
Margaret Perez  
Sue Peterson

### Deacons

#### Class of 2011

Ruth Meehlhause  
Helen Willhite

#### Class of 2012

Kay Gibson  
Chuck Hunger  
\*Bruce Walker

#### Class of 2013

Mary Ellen Beard  
Karen Hunger  
Jane Seils  
\*Moderator

### Committees

#### Christian Education:

Sue Peterson

Finance: Camille Jones

#### Mission & Outreach:

Charles Bell

Property: Eddie Seils

Worship: Margaret Perez

Fellowship: Linda Kopecky

Environmental: Melissa Jones

## Newsletter DEADLINE

Deadlines for articles are **12:00 noon** the Tuesday following regular monthly session meetings. **Newsletter deadline is December 20<sup>th</sup>.**

Newsletter articles can be submitted to the church office by:  
→E-mail: [fpcweslacotx@ies.net](mailto:fpcweslacotx@ies.net)  
→Phone/Fax: 969-1535  
→In person during our regular office hours.

## Revised Common Lectionary Scriptures for December

### 4 December

Isa. 40:1-11; Ps. 85:1-2, 8-13;  
2 Peter 3:8-15a, Mark 1:1-8

### 11 December

Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11; Ps. 126 or Luke 1:46b-55  
1 Thess. 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

### 18 December

2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55 or  
Ps. 89:1-4, 19-26; Rom. 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

### 25 December

Isa. 62:6-12; Ps. 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2: (1-7) 8-20  
Isa. 52:7-10; Ps. 98; Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12)  
John 1:1-14