

The Alert First Central Presbyterian Church Abilene, Texas

December, 2018

Cliff's Notes



"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." ...Jesus

Dear FCPC friends,

"Journey to Joy" is our Advent Christmas FCPC focus this year. We need more joy in our lives! Oh, how we all need the joy of grace, the joy of being alive, the joy of each of us making a difference. We need to recognize the joy that is all around us!

Look around you at the Christians you know. How much are they enjoying life? By the looks on some faces you see anything but joy. The lack of joy makes me wonder how many of Christ's followers have yet to sign up for life. Where is the joy of living?

Each Sunday in Advent we are going to consider the dynamic of Christmas Joy.

And speaking of Joy - here are a few random thoughts:

- ◆ One is that joy is not a solitary experience. Joy is shared. Joy is contagious.
- ◆ Joy is not something one is able to keep to yourself even if you try! Even in prison, the apostle Paul could not help but be joyful. From prison he writes to "rejoice in the Lord always." And then, to make sure that he gets his point across he continues: "again, I will say, rejoice."
- ◆ Happiness is different than joy. Happiness is when what happens is favorable to us. Joy is far different. We can be joyful despite the circumstances. I have seen joy in the worst of circumstances.
- ◆ The roots of joy are like those of desert plants that have the ability to survive in adverse circumstances. Their roots are long and deep, far below the sandy surface. A joy filled Christian digs deep roots in one's relationship with Jesus.

Hope to see you **EVERY** Sunday in Advent. We will be in the "NEW" sanctuary. I cannot wait for you to see it. The organ will not be fully tuned but I think it sounds great as I have heard Larry Wolz practice on it.

I pray that our worship together will increase your heartfelt joy. For the closer we come to Jesus...the nearer we are to the source of joy.

Joy to the world,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be the name 'Cliff'.

Around First Central

Christmas Dinner



The Christmas Dinner prior to our annual Christmas Pageant will be this Sunday, December 9, at 5:45 p.m. in Faith Hall. The traditional Christmas dinner of turkey, dressing, green beans, sweet potatoes, rolls and pecan cobbler is being catered by Sharon's. **This year, you can request a plate to go**—in fact, we encourage members to do so! Of course, if you want to sit down and eat, we will still have the tables set for a time of Advent fellowship. Guests are asked to pay \$10/meal. Reservations may be made by signing up in the foyer or calling the church office. This dinner is hosted each year by the Deacons and coordinated by Judy Miller. Afterward, the Children's Christmas Pageant is held at 7 p.m.

Christmas Pageant

The Children's Christmas Pageant will be held in the sanctuary this Sunday evening at 7 p.m. Be sure to join us to see the Christmas story portrayed by some of the youngest members of FCPC—many members say that the Christmas season has not truly begun until they've seen the angels dance!



Christmas Eve Service



The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is a lovely way to celebrate the holiday. Join us for this contemplative service at 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Communion will be served, and the service will be preceded by and feature special guitar music from Dan Mitchell.

Poinsettias

Memorial and honorary poinsettias are a lovely way to pay tribute to loved ones. These poinsettias will adorn the sanctuary and will be delivered to some of our homebound members to help brighten their holiday. Please fill out a form and place it in the offering plate with your donation or deliver it to the church office by Wednesday, December 12. Forms are available in



Sunday bulletins or at the church office. You may also call the church office at (325) 677-3501 to give your information over the phone.

FCPC Christmas Caroling



Christmas caroling is a fun FCPC tradition where we travel around town on a chartered bus singing some of our favorite hymns of the season to homebound members. We will pass out treats to those we visit as well, so join us from 3-5 p.m. on Sunday, December 16th. Fun for all ages!

Advent Candle Lighters

Advent Candle lighters may be a family, an individual, a couple of friends. Make a memory this Season of Advent by signing up to light the Advent candles for one of the worship services. The liturgy is provided and instructions given. The sign-up page is on the information counter in the foyer.



Special Hours for PNO



Parents' Night Out will have extended hours on December 14th. Childcare will be available from 6-9:30 to allow for extra shopping time if you need to buy, pack, or wrap a surprise for a child in the nursery.

Christian Education News

On the brink of 2018 I am excited for the year ahead, for the Snowden household and Christian Education. I want to share what will be new focuses for Christian Education in 2019. We have a really excellent committee that has done wonderful work to arrive at new goals, and it is a pleasure to have the thoughtfulness and direction a good committee can bring, so I want to share those with you. The CE goals for 2019 include creating an evaluation rubric so that the major events of CE—Confirmation, Advent Fair, Celebration of Education, MO Ranch Retreat, etc. can be discussed to see that each year's challenges can be addressed and what goes well can be continued. Secondly, CE hopes to host a family mission trip. The trip in 2019 would be available for people of



all ages much like the trip that coincided with Janice's Doctoral project a few years ago. Finally, CE hopes to do create regular announcements of the many CE opportunities that exist at FCPC. When any new Sunday School or small group moves to a new study, we want to make sure people are aware that they can attend without making a lifelong commitment. This may include a regular newsletter and "Exploration of Education" moments in the service.

This December, there are several things at FCPC to make the season bright. We are extending PNO hours on December 14th so parents can do a little Christmas shopping or take care of something that has "some assembly required." Our Christmas pageant and dinner are a wonderful way to put you in the Christmas Spirit, and childcare is available for our Christmas Eve service, although it is a service your children may enjoy.

The Christmas season is not only about looking back to what happened 2,000 years ago. It is a season of pregnant expectation of what is to come. I am looking forward to 2019, and hope you are too!

Merry Christmas!

Youth and Emerging Adults News



All Youth Christmas Party

One of FCPC Youth's best traditions is the All Youth Christmas Party. We are making a fun change to this year's event! "White elephant" Christmas ornaments will be exchanged per-usual, but we are changing the location. We will meet at Skatin Place from 1-2:45 PM on December 16th and enjoy some time rolling around the rink together. Bring \$10 and a wrapped Christmas ornament with you to the rink! Food will be provided by the Skatin Place.

Youth and Emerging Adult Holiday Hiatus

With the first semester of the school year coming to a close, the Youth and Emerging Adults groups will take a break from evening meetings. The last evening event of the semester for Youth is December 16. Youth activities will resume January 6. The last evening event of the semester for Emerging Adults is December 5. EA activities will resume January 16. Church School will continue as usual without a break for those who would like to attend.



New Officers for 2019

On Sunday, December 16, after the 11 am worship service we will have a congregational meeting to elect officers. The following are the nominations presented by the congregational nominating committee:



Elder Nominations:

Yvan Randria	Cisco Villajuana
Bill Core	Charlene Fleener
Ann Giddens	

Deacon Nominations:

Dwight Brisbin	Ron Pope
Ralph Hoover	Janis Test
Courtney Epstein	Winona Somerville
Linda Moffatt	Michael Miller (2 Yr. Term)

Bequests and Planned Giving:

Sue Lucas

Trustees:

Barbara Schriever Charlene Bevill
Carl Trusler

Church-Wide Christmas Party!



Our all-church Christmas party will be Friday, December 14 at the home of Janice and Gene Six, 65 Glen Abbey, starting at 6:30 p.m.!

Bring a favorite appetizer or finger food along with a "white elephant" gift for the annual wild and crazy gift exchange! All members of FCPC are welcome to join us.

Seekers Sunday School Study

Peaceful Neighbor is a new study in the Seekers Sunday School class, which meets at 9:45 in the movie room next to Perkins Chapel. Jacob Snowden will lead a discussion of the book Peaceful Neighbor: Discovering the Countercultural Mr. Rogers over the next several weeks. The class is introduced today. Jacob has books for sale for \$15.



Stewardship 2019

“Sowing Seeds of Hope” is our stewardship emphasis for 2019. We have recently distributed our “estimate of giving” cards. We hope that you will seriously consider your estimated projection for the new year. We do not ask you to support a budget. Instead we ask you to give to God – and then our promise is to gratefully construct a budget that realistically reflects the support of our congregation.



For the coming year, we are considering what it means to plant seeds that produce a harvest in the future. What you give...will make a difference.

If you didn't receive an “estimate of giving” card already, you can find them in the friendship books, the information desk or the church office.

Breakfast on Beech Street



B.O.B.S. is serving a need! In November 1166 people received breakfasts and 1801 sandwiches for sack lunches were made and disbursed.

That brings our year's total to serving 15,913 breakfasts (597 being to youth). In addition, sack lunches including 25,473 sandwiches have been distributed.

Your monetary donations are always appreciated, and if you would like to be a part of a FCPC Thursday morning team, please contact the church office (677-3501).

Food Pantry News

Dear Friends of the Frances Buzard Presbyterian Food Pantry, it is time to turn our attention to our toy drive at the pantry. On December 11 and 18 we will distribute toys to our pantry families in addition to food. Please help us by donating new or gently used toys as soon as possible. We will be collecting things for babies through teens. Help your children sort their toys and generously choose things they have outgrown or no longer play with to give to children who have so little.



In November, the Food Pantry provided 250 families with food for a week, totaling 726 people – 412 adults, 93 senior citizens and 221 children aged 1-18. Thank you so much for your support.

Gratitude

Dear FCPC Family,
Thank you so much for all your cards, calls, prayers and support following the recent death of Teiko. Your thoughtfulness and care made our loss much easier to bear.

John Armistead and sons

Dear FCPC Church Family,

I am astounded by your open-handedness! The Advent Fair was a beautiful representation of the spirit of First Central - lively, fun, diverse, and generous. The Christian Education Committee had two goals in mind for this event. The first was to raise funds for Youth and Emerging Adults missions, and the second was to create an event that everyone in the church could enjoy. Goodness, did we meet and those goals! This was by far the most well attended Advent Fair of which I have been a part and together we raised almost \$2000 to be divided between Youth and Emerging Adults special giving mission accounts. These funds will help the Senior-High Youth get to Colorado for a week of construction and food ministry service and assist the Emerging Adults in traveling to Romania to serve the needs of Romanian orphaned children. There are so many people that made the evening a success. To all those who attended, donated funds, provided items for sale, preformed, led children's crafts, made desserts, set up and cleaned up, brought food and drinks, and monitored the market tables, I say, “Thank you,” from the bottom of my heart!

Sincerely,

Kristen Harris-Bridwell

Director of Youth and Emerging Adult Ministries

Sympathy

We extend our sympathies to the Pope and Pate families on the death of Ralph Pope, to the Alexander family on the death of Josiane Alexander, to Doris Grosvenor and family on the death of her sister Jean McFarland, and to the Wehmeyer family on the death of Brenda Wehmeyer.

Celebrations

We congratulate Mary Jane & Chuck Chambers on the birth of their son Gabriel Henry Chambers. Gabriel was born November 26.