Dear FCPC Family,

A favorite poem is T.S. Eliot’s “Journey of the Magi”. Eliot imagines the journey of the wisemen in the following fashion:

‘A cold coming we had of it,  
Just the worst time of the year  
For a journey, and such a long journey:  
The ways deep and the weather sharp,  
The very dead of winter.’  
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,  
Lying down in the melting snow.  
There were times we regretted  
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,  
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.  
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling  
And running away, and wanting their liquor  
and women,  
And the night-fires going out,  
and the lack of shelters,  
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly  
And the village dirty and charging high prices;  
A hard time we had of it.  
At the end we preferred to travel all night,  
Sleeping in snatches,  
With the voices singing in our ears, saying  
That this was all folly.

Eliot is right about this much: Finding Christ in this world could be a long and hard journey. Finding the presence of God can sometimes seem elusive. If you have at times known that to be true, I hope you will resolve to join us in worship each Sunday of this new year.

And remember that the one we search for has searched and found us!

Happy New Year,
**2019 Church Budget**

We need your input. The committees are now beginning to formulate our 2019 budget that will be adopted by the Session on January 22nd. On that day at 7 pm we will have a budget hearing, to which we welcome all members of the congregation. This meeting will be followed by a meeting of the Session to adopt the 2019 budget.

**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.

**Inquirer’s Class**

The Inquirer’s Class answers questions new members and visitors might have about FCPC and the Presbyterian faith. What do Presbyterians believe? How does our church work? A great class for those interested in joining, new members, or just those who want to know more about the church! All are welcome. This class, led by our senior pastor, Cliff Stewart, is an informal gathering that takes place over the course of several weeks. The next Inquirer’s Class will begin on January 20th. This class meets during the Sunday School hour (9:45-10:45 a.m.) in the office suite across from Faith Hall and lasts for several weeks. We hope you’ll consider joining us!
**Wednesday Nights Return**

Our Wednesday Night studies will resume on January 23rd. These programs feature a variety of speakers and topics and are a FCPC favorite! First up will be Dr. Jeff Key, political science chair of Sweetbriar College in Virginia. This is his annual “state of the world” projection. He will predict the winner of the next presidential election. Note that he has missed 100% of his predictions over the years! Jeff is a great teacher and is very informed on world politics.

**Knit & Crochet**

Our Knit and Crochet group welcomes you to stop by any Wednesday between 10 a.m. and noon. If you’ve ever wanted to learn to knit or crochet, this is a great group to show you how. Yarn and needles are available. A bonus is the delightful conversation, hot coffee and usually homemade cookies. Several participants are currently working on caps for the children served by N.O.R.O.C. in Tulcea Romania. The motto of the group is, “Come when you can. Leave when you must!”

**Christian Education News**

Two events are on the calendar for January 2019 that are close to my heart. First, since 1908, eight days have been set aside to consider Christian Unity—between January 18th and January 25th. Initially a Roman Catholic observance, it did not take long for Protestants to pick up the idea. Paul Couturier, the so-called “father of spiritual ecumenism” advocated prayer “for the unity of the Church as Christ wills it, and in accordance with the means he wills.” John 17 reminds readers that Jesus prayed “they may be one so that the world may believe.” The second event that coincides with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Surely Dr. King is a role model for what it means for Christians to work for unity. Unity is not only about the religious differences that create categories like Protestant and Catholic, Evangelical and Mainline, or Liberal and Conservative. For this week of prayer, my hope is that we might see things as Paul sees them in Galatians 3. For all the ways we have chosen to divide ourselves, and in divided times, let us remember that “In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female for we are all one in Christ.” Surely if Christ abolished those barriers to unity in Paul’s day, that same spirit that was in Christ continues to break down the barriers we have created for ourselves.

So start the new year with a new perspective—which is not really so new—that Christ desires us to be united in love, by grace, and for justice. For at least one week, I hope you will consider with me how to make this seem to be a truer reality.

Logos begins January 27th.

**Youth News**

The month of January is dedicated to the planning of Youth Sunday, a day on which FCPC’s 6th-12th graders oversee and lead every aspect of worship for both the 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM services. The 12th grade students pick the theme, write sermons, and select the music, while the younger members serve as the choir and the ushers, help write prayers, create the children’s sermon, and play instruments. The worship services for Youth Sunday are always a joy! Make sure you are in attendance this year on January 27th.

**Food Pantry News**

Dear Friends of the Frances Buzard Presbyterian Food Pantry, as we step into the new year we are in particular need of cans of soup and boxes of crackers. If you could help by donating some of these items that would be greatly appreciated. We also invite you to consider giving a small monthly donation to help defray the costs of the large numbers of people we are serving. Thank you for your support of this vital ministry.

In December, the Food Pantry provided 101 families with food for a week, totaling 304 people — 173 adults, 37 senior citizens and 94 children aged 1-18. Over all of 2018, we served 1,647 families, totaling 4,459 people — 2,495 adults, 564 senior citizens and 1,372 children aged 1-18. Thank you so much for your support.
Toy Drive

Grandmas (and anyone else) clean out your closets and attic! The Presbyterian Women will be having a children’s toy resale event in February to benefit the Kenya Water Well and Mother Esther School and Rescue Center Project. Please bring any gently used children’s toys that you would be willing to donate to the church office by the end of January.

Breakfast on Beech Street

B.O.B.S. continues to serve a need. In December 1116 guests were served breakfast (71 being youth). 1790 sandwiches went out in sack lunches which also included fruit and cookies.

That closes out the 2018 yearly totals to 17,029 breakfasts (668 being to youth). In addition, sack lunches including 27,263 sandwiches were made and distributed.

Your monetary donations are always appreciated, and if you would like to be a part of a FCPC Thursday please call the church office at 677-3501. We could use your help!

Gratitude

Dear Cliff and the FCPC Family,
Martha and I would like to thank you and all the members of your congregation for all of the prayers, hospital visits and acts of kindness extended to us during our extended stay in Abilene. Your courtesy and Christian kindness helped make a difficult situation easier to bear.

We would like to return to Abilene in the future to renew our new friendships and to worship with you.

Hank & Martha Sweetman

Dear FCPC,
A big thanks to each singer that visited University Place on the Christmas Singing tour—just wonderful to see FCPC friends!

Also, thanks to the Presbyterian Women for the goodies they sent—I’ll enjoy them. The poinsettia is still extremely beautiful.

In Christ’s Love and mine,
Jo Bright

Dear FCPC,
I would like to say thank you for the gifts for my grandson (given by the angel tree donations arranged through Thelma Gray/PCHAS). He will enjoy them.

Thank you,
Darella Sparks

Dear FCPC,
Many, many thanks for the lovely poinsettia plant that was given to me. I very much appreciate it.

Mary K. Haffner

Dear Pastor Janice and FCPC,
I would like to thank you and the entire family of FCPC for being with us in our hard period of losing Josiane Micomyiza Alexander. Only God can reward you, we can not thank you enough. May God Bless you so much.

Best,
Emmanuel Bakundukize

Sympathy

We extend our sympathies to the Andrews family on the death of Marjorie Andrews, to the Herald family on the death of Mike Herald, and to the Grosvenor family on the death of Doris Grosvenor.

Celebrations

We congratulate Brett & Leanna Grosvenor on the birth of their son Grady Dean Grosvenor. Grady was born on December 5th, 2018.