



# THE PRESS-BYTE

*First Presbyterian Church Sand Springs*  
[www.fpcsandsprings.org](http://www.fpcsandsprings.org)



## ON GIFTS AND BLACK FRIDAYS

They have been waiting for this day for at least a month. Many phone calls have been made to compile a list of requests or ideas for gifts for their friends and family members. Hours have been spent pouring over promotional flyers from stores throughout the city to discover the best deals, the time the store opens, and the early bird discounts.

Now “Black Friday” is just an hour or so away as they make their final itinerary showing the times they will be at each store and the items to be purchased there. The day is called “Black Friday,” I believe, because it is the day retailers count on to move them from the “red” into the “black” for the year.

When it comes to shopping for Christmas gifts, this couple is not weak in the knees. While they don’t turn it into blood sport as a few do, they nevertheless take it quite seriously, planning thoroughly and enjoying the great savings they reap as a result.

Were it not for their research, their willingness to deprive themselves of sleep, and their methodical and efficient approach to getting the job done, they would have to settle for lesser gifts and probably

still end up deeper in debt in January than they cared to.

So as the clock approaches midnight, their gas tank is full, their lists and itinerary are in hand, and their minds are as prepared as an elite athlete before a championship game. Then they head out the door.

We can easily forget, but the gifts they will purchase—in addition to being a token of their love and care for the recipients—are meant to represent the greatest gift ever given.



Wrapped in some scraps of inexpensive cloth and laid in a feeding trough, this gift was the very life of God made fragile and vulnerable so that it might be clearly seen to be for all people.

The Babe born in Bethlehem would grow up quickly enough, as children always do. As an adult, he would show how costly God would allow his gift for us to be. On that “Black Friday”—black be-

cause the sky turned black as Jesus died and black because of the deep rebellion of humanity that made this hour necessary—God would take into himself the sin and brokenness of all humans and death itself, robbing them of their ultimate power and freeing us to live and to love.

A favorite pastime of mine as a child was to take each present with my name on it and gently examine it. I’d feel its weight, shake it lightly, consider its size, and try to guess its contents. Receiving a gift is an exciting thing, and while I enjoyed the suspense, I was also eager to discover the truth of what the gift was. On Christmas morning, I’d look forward to opening the gifts and spending time with them.

Sometimes the people who give us gifts at Christmas miss the mark in terms of things we’d find enjoyable or useful. Rarely, though, do we totally reject the gift—even when it is of little value. Gifts are to be enjoyed!

Somehow the most costly gift of all, though, is one that we often walk away from without even opening. Perhaps the wrapping is too drab—not

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flashy enough to make us think it will be fun to have. Perhaps we intuitively know that it is a gift that also asks something of us. Perhaps we fear we are unworthy of it (which we all are... that’s why it’s a gift!).

This Christmas may you reach for the gift that matters most. May you take it, hold it, examine it, and trust that it is good. May you enjoy it and let it enter and transform you ever more deeply.

Grace & Peace,

*Dan*

## PRAYER LIST

### NEW CONCERNS

The family of Jeff Frey (friend of Mark Perry) on his death.  
 Jammie Edwards & family on the passing of her mother, Tootsie Stephens.  
 The family of April Campbell (friend of Haley Legg) on her death.  
 Jennifer Chapman—Stroke  
 Kim Tilley—Hospitalized for surgery  
 Laura Bright—Cataract surgery  
 John Bright's grandmother—Pneumonia  
 Carolyn Bellmyer (Crystal Hilgendorf's mother)—Broken ankle  
 The family of Rev. Shirl Butler on his death.  
 Chuck Cook (Phil & Bobbie's son)—Health concerns  
 Jerry Jackson (Len Gardner's father-in-law)—Pacemaker implanted  
 Bruce Phillips—Recovering from prostate cancer surgery and the passing of his mother.



### ONGOING CONCERNS

#### Deployed Service Personnel

Andrea Campfield	Joe Stephenson	Jennifer Ciriack
Dale Hamilton	Katie Parish	Chris Gibson
Bobbie Cook	Phil Cook	Robert Snead
Wes Matthews	Korbyn Parker	Patti Davis
James Furr	Hannah Hammond	Sue Shelton's father
Jan Powell	Bruce Phillips	Stan Carder
Darcia Guffey	Nathan Barnes	Frank Murphy
Mace Maben	Susan Hauglund	Margaret Hammond
Eric Crane	Brent Hauglund	Tom Byerly
Jordan Scruggs	Marti McGuinness	Nancy Collins
Sarah Brigham	Jim Fahland	Wanda Hankins
Carolyn Baker	Dotty Drymon	Burl Grisham
Hayden Harris	Jamie Manning	Margaret Lewis
Connie Carlisle	Rocky Sparks	

### HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

Ines Anderson	Billie Moss	Melvane Perry
Thelma Peterson	Teddy White	Anita Ward

### EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

In case of emergency, please do not hesitate to seek help from the church. We can be reached at any time, day or night, by using one of the following contact numbers:

1. The church office: 245-1748
2. Pastor Dan Milford: 606-3761 (cell), or 241-3544 (home).
3. Clerk of Session Dave Kvach: 630-5870 (cell).
4. Chair of Personnel Bill Stuckert: 742-2325 (home) or 625-2956 (cell).

If you cannot make contact through any of these numbers, we have made arrangements with First Presbyterian Church, Tulsa, and their pastors are willing to be on call for us. Call 584-4701 and you will be directed as to how you can reach their on-call pastor.

## FROM OUR MAILBOX . . .



November 19, 2010

Greetings:

Thank you for your recent gift to The Outreach Foundation in support of God's mission in the world. We recently sent a gift receipt and will send out a consolidated giving statement early next year.

The Outreach Foundation is a mission organization that connects Presbyterians and others with missionaries and partners around the world who are proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed. In 2009, we disbursed nearly six million dollars in support of mission work. We focus on supporting missionaries and strengthening global partners' efforts to plant and build churches, equip their leaders and care for vulnerable children. Although "foundation" is in our name, we are not a funded foundation. The resources that we have to support mission work are funds that have been given to us by individuals and congregations, by people like you.

The Outreach Foundation is now thirty years old, and we thank God that our work continues to expand. We are known for our evangelistic focus, for the strong relationships that we facilitate between global partners and supporters, for financial transparency and accountability, and for the effective ways that we focus resources for God's mission. You can learn more about us at [www.theoutreachfoundation.org](http://www.theoutreachfoundation.org).

As one of the validated mission support groups of the Presbyterian Church (USA), much of our work is with PC(USA) congregations and mission partners. Yet we think of our ministry as Kingdom work, not denominational work, and we joyfully share in ministry with believers and congregations from other churches.

We are very excited about all that we see God doing in the world, and we thank you for your gift. Please visit our website, and let us know if there are ways that we can help you or your congregation participate in God's mission. You can reach me at 1-800-791-5023.

Yours in Christ Jesus,  
 Rob Weingartner  
 Executive Director

P.S.

Thank you for your support of Nancy Collins' important ministry in Africa!

## SERMON ON THE AMOUNT

	Gen. Offering	Gen. Offering
Needed in Dec.	\$20,109.66	Budget YTD \$232,034.60
Rec'd in Dec.	<u>11,631.05</u>	Giving YTD <u>200,761.54</u>
Difference	(\$ 8,478.61)	Difference (\$ 31,273.06)



December is a busy and exciting time for children at First Presbyterian Church! On December 12, the children presented "The Last Resort" Christmas musical during worship service. It was a wonderful way to share with the congregation the story of the Birth of Christ through music and drama! Thank you to all who helped and participated in this special program! Also, on December 15th during Wednesday Night Live, the children made cookies for our shut-ins and delivered them. Thanks to Sharon Lewis for sponsoring this service project.

We will continue in December with our Birthday Party for Jesus Celebration on December 19th during the Sunday School hour starting at 9:30. We will be playing games, making ornaments, listening to the Christmas Story, and enjoying a delicious cake for Jesus! Please bring either a pair of mittens, or a scarf that we will give to families in need this winter.

Let us all look forward to Jesus' Birth!

God Bless,  
Ms. Marti



## ANGEL TREE GIFTS



The Deacons would like to thank you once again for your generosity in making Christmas special for this year's angels. The gifts have been delivered to the Salvation Army for distribution.

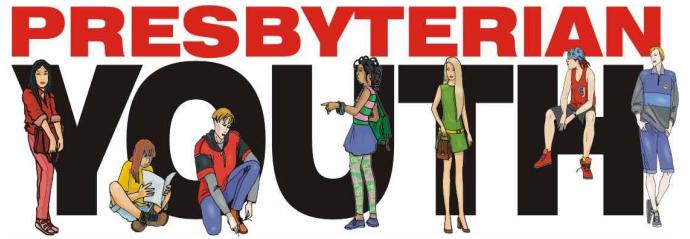
Many thanks,  
Marcia Bates & Peggy Sue Wallace

## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



The Board of Deacons would like to thank everyone who purchased poinsettias this year. If you purchased one, it may be picked up after the Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24th. Those remaining will be delivered to shut-ins. Thanks again for beautifying our church during the holiday season.

Pam Smithey & Charlotte Griffis



### Sunday, Jan 23

The youth is invited to participate in a service project on Sunday, Jan 23. Further details will follow.

### Sunday, Jan 30

We will be having our annual Chili Cook-off/Talent Show to raise funds for camp on Sunday, Jan 30. All youth planning on attending camp are encouraged to either bring some homemade chili or perform in the talent show or both. Everyone is invited to come on out and enjoy good food and good fun for a great cause.

Bill Z.

## CONFIRMATION CLASS



January is just around the corner, and it's time for confirmation classes to begin! These classes are open to youth in the 6th grade and older who have not yet been confirmed. A letter went out two weeks ago to invite youth to be a part of this class. If you (or your child) has interest in participating but has not been contacted, please let me know; I'd love to have them in the class!

Teaching the class is one of my favorite things to do in ministry, as I enjoy the time spent with the youth and I enjoy getting to help them ask important questions about what it means to follow Jesus in their lives.

It will begin with a mini-retreat on the evening of January 7. Classes will then take place each Sunday from 12:45 until 2:00 p.m. through the end of March (except during Spring Break). If you're a youth who hasn't been confirmed yet, come join us and learn what following Jesus is all about!  
Peace, Dan

# Advent Worship Schedule



We hope you are enjoying this Advent season. The remaining schedule follows. Services begin at 11:00 a.m. except where otherwise noted.

- Dec. 19 11:00 a.m.—Choral Cantata  
“Christmas Crossroads”
- Dec. 19 5:30 p.m.—Soup Dinner  
6:15 p.m.—Advent Service of Lessons  
and Carols
- Dec. 24 7:30 p.m.—Christmas Eve Communion  
and Candlelight Service

## SOUP DINNER & ADVENT SERVICE

### Advent Services



Come at 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 19 with a pot of your favorite soup with enough to share. We'll sample one another's kitchen creations and then settle in for a special evening of music beginning at 6:15 p.m.

beginning at 6:15 p.m.

The service begins in dim light in our sanctuary, reminding us that it was into a darkened world that Jesus came. Passages of scripture will be read, beginning with the prophets and moving toward Matthew's birth narrative. After each scripture is read, candles will be lit, lighting will increase, and a carol will be sung. We'll leave with a bright sanctuary and bright hearts, knowing that the light that came into the world has come into our lives as well!

## SPRING BOOK SALE

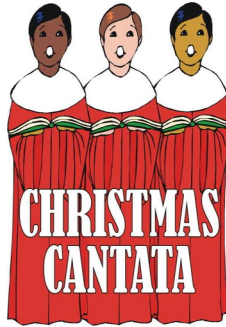


Please save your books, DVDs and books on tape for our Spring book sale to help raise money for our kids to attend church camp. If you have questions, please contact Sharon Lewis, 918-697-6807. Thanks in advance for your help!

CE Committee



## CHORAL CANTATA



Throughout the fall, several of our members begin preparing to share a special gift with us at Christmas. They learn the words, reflect on their meaning, practice their parts and work on interpreting the music in ways that will help make the words come alive for us. All this and more for one worship service.

On December 19, our choir will present their cantata, filling the majority of the service and giving us the opportunity to listen for God through the meaning of the lyrics and the feeling of the music. This is an annual highlight of the Advent season at First Presbyterian.

## CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE



### Christmas Eve Communion

"Silent Night." So come...and bring someone with you!

On Christmas Eve we will celebrate the birth of Christ in worship. The candlelight and communion service will begin at 7:30 p.m. This service focuses entirely on God's gift to us. The service follows its traditional format, closing with the sanctuary bathed in candlelight to the strains of

## Holiday Office Hours:

The office will be closed Dec. 23rd through Jan. 1st. In case of emergency, please contact Bill Stuckert at 742-2325 or 625-2956 or Dave Kvach at 630-5870.





First Presbyterian Church Children's Ministry  
Cordially Invites All Children Through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade to Our

# ANNUAL BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS

December 19  
9:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Bring a new pair of mittens or scarf that we will give to people in need. We will celebrate the birth of Jesus through games, making ornaments, the telling of the Christmas Story, and a special birthday cake for Jesus. Eat breakfast before coming, but save room for some yummy cake!



**January Fellowship  
Dinner**

## YOUTH SERVICE PROJECT

The January fellowship dinner will be held on January 9th. Committee members are:

Sheila Chapman, Chair

Glenda Bare	Norma Mitchell
Max & Dorothy Bartley	Travis & Tyler Moore
Mayme Crawford	Margie Neff
Tom & Kristi Rains	Jay & Tamra McAtee
Snooks Williford	



The youth will be going to Lindsey House on Saturday, Dec. 18th at 8:30 a.m. for the purpose of helping to move furniture. This project should be completed and allow for a return to the church around 11:30 a.m.



**From the staff at First Presbyterian Church Sand Springs  
May Peace, Joy, Hope, and Happiness be yours during this  
Christmas season and throughout the New Year!**

<i>Dan</i>	<i>Bill</i>	<i>Marti</i>	<i>Doug</i>
<i>Amanda</i>	<i>Gail</i>	<i>Kyla</i>	<i>Willa</i>

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## **Sunday Worship**

9:30 a.m. Fellowship

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

## **SERVING IN DECEMBER**

Greeter—Charlotte Griffis

Ushers—Sheila Chapman, Captain; Cody Shelton,  
Craig Hilgendorf, Evan Hilgendorf

Liturgist—Doug Ruffner

Trustee Lock-Up—Pam Walker

## **SERVING IN JANUARY**

Greeter—Glenda Bare

Ushers—Nadia Rosales, Captain; Austin, Joshua,  
& Alexis Milford-Rosales; Cody Shelton

Liturgist—Jeanie Kvach

Trustee Lock-Up—Steve Duncan

### **NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

9:00 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2011

### **BULLETIN DEADLINE**

Wednesdays @ 9:00 a.m.