

Living Out God's Call to Joy and to Justice

Prayer requests -- Week of December 3

New and Recent Prayer Requests:

- Prayers of consolation for Avrel Seale and his family at the death of Avrel's father-in-law on December 2.
- Prayers of healing for Marco Armando Davila, Martin Davila's son, who has injured his knee and will probably need surgery.
- Prayers of healing for Marcos, grandson of Lydia Davora, a friend of FPC. Marcos, who is 21, suffered a brain aneurysm. He is hospitalized in McAllen Medical.
- Prayers of gratitude that Tom Snoke, Kathy Garfield's son-in-law, is doing much better after some medication changes.
- Prayers of continued improvement for Mel Philips, Kathy Garfield's brother-in-law.
- Prayers of healing for Rachel Green White, youngest daughter of Marci Green who is the sister of Thomas Ball, as she undergoes radiation therapy for metastatic breast cancer that has spread to her vertebrae.
- Prayers of thanksgiving for the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon as they celebrate the 66th anniversary of independence from the Basel mission.
- Prayers that the FPC Session will be led by the Holy Spirit as they begin preparing a 2024 church budget.
- Prayers for all who are hungry or lonely or without shelter this day.
- Prayers for Chris and Kelly Leonard and their nephew Grant.
- Prayers of healing for Sophy Vance who is experiencing medication side-effects.
- Prayers of thanksgiving for improvement in Dee Trevino's mobility and comfort following recent surgery.
- Prayers of thanksgiving that Martin Davila's mother, Maria, is doing much better.
- Prayers for peace in the Middle East.
- Prayers for the safety of Moazz Zaid Younes (friend of ZZ Hamilton), his family and all Palestinians.
- Prayers of safety for Sveta, Anahird, Tora, and other Ukranian and Russian friends of ZZ Hamilton.
- Prayers of healing and consolation for Betty Conover of Berea, Kentucky, brother of Jesse, who worships at FPC regularly. Betty injured her wrist in a fall, and recently lost her husband.
- Jay Travis, Ann Sahadi's son and Andrea Hudler's brother, diagnosed with ALS, is experiencing increasing challenges.
- John Kreidler is continuing to recover from recent brain surgery.
- Bob Houlihan, father of Kelly Leonard, is undergoing chemotherapy for prostate cancer.
- Prayers of continued healing for David Massey, son of Joe and Jinny, who has transferred from hospital to rehab following a recent stroke.
- Marilyn Travis, wife of Andrea Hudler's father Paul, remains in rehab.
- Prayers of safety and hope for the people of Cameroon as civil war continues there and violence escalates. Gifts for PDA's work in Cameroon can be made at: <https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/cameroon/>

On-going Prayer Requests:

- Vinson McLeod
- Estelle Davenport; Brookridge Senior Living; 1301 W. Ridge Road, Apt. 220, Pharr, TX 78577
- Gail Keyes; 215-594-1072; 3334 Country Club Dr., Edinburgh, 78542
- Lou Helt; 956-601-0823; 1301 W. Ridge Road, Apt. 229; Pharr, TX 78577
- Elizabeth Gearhart; c/o Diane Albert; 1350 Burnham Lane, Batavia, IL 60510
- Ann Sahadi; 1380 Charles Drive, Apt. 415; Longmont, CO 80503; 956-509-1729
- Rita Cochrane; The Gardens at Brookridge; 1301 W. Ridge Road, Apt. 111; Pharr, TX 78577
- Roberta Harrieff
- Melinda Wright
- Duke Dashbach
- Mac Williams, husband of Crystal Simpson and son-in-law of Lita and Bob Simpson.
- Sharon Willets; 316 Hazlett Ave., Wheeling, WV 26003.
- Jeff Schneider, brother of Doug and good friend of Sher and Drue Wilkes.
- Anna Finn, Mary Ellen Schneider's sister-in-law, has been diagnosed with lung cancer.
- Prayers that Dalton Moes might experience growth toward robust mental health.
- Crystal Simpson
- Karen Ayers, Sher Wilkes' cousin, has been diagnosed with cancer.
- Prayers for Emmanuel Tabali and his family as they settle into life in the Valley.
- Jim McLeod, younger brother of Vinson McLeod.
- Carl Walborg, son of Shirley Pippin's good friend Mary Ann Walborg, recently diagnosed with cancer.
- Connor Magee, Mark and Joyce Magee's grandson.
- Mary Ann Walborg, very good friend of Shirley Pippin, as she deals with health and cognitive issues.
- Victor Herrera, Ezequiel's brother, dealing with long-term health issues
- Cisco Villa
- Anthony Trevino
- The people of the *colonias*.
- Prayers for peace and stability in Africa as nations experience political upheaval and threats of escalating violence.

Link for all FPC Zoom meetings: WORSHIP IS NOW STREAMED ON FACEBOOK LIVE, NOT ZOOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86050357489?pwd=VkhqODg0NjIjFS2VTsm91UFFOSjVjQT09>

Meeting ID: 860 5035 7489 Passcode: 912217

Link for Facebook Live streaming worship services:

[https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=first%20presbyterian%20church%2C%20mcallen%2C%20tx.](https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=first%20presbyterian%20church%2C%20mcallen%2C%20tx)

Budget Report through November 2023

| 2023 | Revenue | Expenses | Net |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| MTD (November) | \$18,924.32 | \$28,253.86 | - \$9,329.54 |
| YTD | \$247,318.34 | \$328,960.74 | - \$81,642.40 |

Calendar

- Monday, December 4: 11:00 a.m.: Staff Meeting; Parlor
 - Monday, December 4: 6:00 p.m.; Advent by Candlelight; First United Methodist Church
 - Wednesday, December 6: 9 to 3: Church Library open for Mid-Week Prayer.
 - Wednesday, December 6: 7:30 p.m.; Choir rehearsal; Choir Room
 - Thursday, December 7: 11:00 a.m.; Space for God Holiday Lunch; 1500 Larkspur, McAllen
 - Sunday, December 10: 9:00 a.m.; Sunday School; Parlor
 - Sunday, December 10: 10:30 a.m.; Worship with Communion; Sanctuary and Facebook Live
 - Sunday, December 17: 5:00 p.m.; Studio 7 Holiday Music Recital; Sanctuary
 - Sunday, December 24: 6:00 p.m.; Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship; Sanctuary and Facebook Live
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December Anniversaries and Birthdays

Anniversaries

Dana and Mauricia Friedman (12/16)
John and Melinda Wright

Erik and Cassie (Vorbach) Vose

Birthdays

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 – Joyce Magee | 10 – Doug Schneider | 20 – Ezequiel Bautista |
| 6 – Rev. O’Quin Kelly | 11 – Ansen Seale | 27 – Ann-Maree Freeland |
| 9 – Sadie Garza | 13 – Felipe Salinas | 29 – Amanda Wright |
| Jeff Schneider | 14 – Carolyn Landrum | 31 – Eng Parker |

Life of the Church – Week of December 3

- It is true that many hands make light work – and that the many hands of the congregation made the church building beautiful during our Hanging of the Green on November 26. Many thanks to everyone for helping with the decorating and the fellowship lunch.
- The CE Calling is providing two **Advent devotionals**: one from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and one from A Sanctified Art. There is also a calendar of Advent activities. All can be picked up in the narthex or requested from the church office.
- Thanks to everyone who picked up an angel from the **Su Casa de Esperanza Angel Tree**. There are just a couple of angels left unclaimed. If you would like one, call or text Pastor Kathy (512-466-5662). Gifts – one toy and one article of clothing; \$25 spending limit recommended – should be returned to the church by December 10, with the angel attached.
- **Poinsettias** have been ordered and will be in place in the sanctuary on December 10. There are 13 still available. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in honor or in memory of someone, please contact the church office or use the order form in your bulletin on Sunday, December 10. Poinsettias can be taken home after the Christmas Eve service on December 24.
- We are again participating in the **Reverse Advent** food collection program. You can bring your food donations any Sunday during Advent and place them in the baskets or on the shelves in the Narthex. The collected food will be given to food pantries in area churches and the RGV Food Bank.
- First United Methodist Church of McAllen is hosting an **Advent by Candlelight** service for women on Monday, December 4 at 6:00 p.m. Speakers include Sister Norma Pimentel, Ramona Casas, Rose Guerra Reyna, and Susan Turlapati.

- The FPC Session has begun work on the **2024 Church Budget**. You should have received a letter from the Session with information about the church's current financial circumstances and a request for your input about 2024 budget priorities. If you have not returned the Budget Priorities survey, please either mail it in the provided envelope, drop it by the church office, or place it in the offering plate during worship by Sunday, December 10. If you did not receive the letter or survey, they are posted at the FPC website (<https://www.mcallenfpc.org/>) or can be requested from the church office.
- The **PC(USA) Office of Public Witness** is the advocacy arm of our denomination. The Office provides *Action Alerts* regarding opportunities to contact public officials with input about current affairs or pending legislation. Last week, the Office of Public Witness issued an *Action Alert* regarding **GusNIP**, an element of the annual Farm Bill. You may remember that Cathy and Felipe Salinas included information about GusNIP in their Bread for the World presentation a few months ago. Here's a link to the *Action Alert*: <https://www.votervoice.net/PCUSA/Campaigns/109012/Respond>. Here is a link for more information about the Office of Public Witness and to sign up for regular updates: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/washington/>

Life of the Church -- On-going

- **Sunday School** meets at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday in the Parlor. The class is using Advent resources from *A Sanctified Art*. Each week's discussion centers on Scripture from Luke and visual arts.
 - If you'd like to add your voice to the **FPC Chancel Choir's** worshipful praise of God, check out choir practice or contact Robert Garza at 956-720-2301 or rob_grza10@yahoo.com. Choir practice is held at 7:30 p.m. each Wednesday in the Choir Room.
 - **Mid-Week Prayer** Each Wednesday, the Church Library (in its new location next to the elevator) will be open during Church office hours for quiet contemplation and prayer. Resources and instructions for various prayer practices will be provided. Prayer time with the pastor or a Ruling Elder may be scheduled by emailing fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com.
 - The Church Library also includes a station to "**Leave a Prayer / Take a Blessing**". There is a table with materials to write a prayer and post it on the bulletin board. Prayers can be shared or private. Printed blessings are available for you to take one (or several). Each month will bring a new blessing.
 - The **church staff** – Pastor Kathy, church administrator Brian Pullen, custodian Shannon Pruneda, and facilities manager Martin Davila – hold weekly meetings on Monday morning. If you have an item for the staff to discuss, please send it to fpchurch@sbcglobal.net or fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com.
 - There is a **Flower** sign-up board in the hallway near the church office for members to sponsor fresh flowers in honor or memory of a loved one on the first Sunday of a month.
 - **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** works with communities facing urgent need. Here is a link to their webpage: <https://pda.pcusa.org/pda/resources/list/?situation=hurricane-ian>
 - **Church Office Hours** are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday, or by appointment.
 - The exterior **Parlor doors** are now key-entry only. If you have an access card for those doors, please dispose of it. To request a key for the exterior church doors, contact the church office.
 - The **Puentes de Cristo** website: <https://puentesdecristo.org/>. Supply list:
 - H-E-B gift cards, food, hygiene supplies, and especially diapers.
 Supplies may be brought to FPC during office hours.
 - How to reach Pastor Kathy: fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com; 512-466-5662
 - How to reach the church office: fpchurch@sbcglobal.net
 - All mail for the church should be sent to P.O. Box 1029, McAllen, TX 78505.
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Lectionary Readings for December 10 – Second Sunday of Advent

Please note: we will not be following the lectionary during Advent. The readings for FPC worship are listed below.

- **Isaiah 40:1-11**
- **Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13**
- **2 Peter 3:8-15a**
- **Mark 1:1-8**

December 10 Scriptures for Worship

- **Isaiah 40:1-11**

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to it that its warfare is ended, that its iniquity is pardoned, that it has received double from God's hand, double for all its sins.

³ A voice cried:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of God shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of God has spoken."

⁶ A voice says, "Cry!"

And I said "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of God blows upon it;
surely the people is grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹ Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah,
"Behold your God!"

¹⁰ The sovereign God comes with might, and rules with a mighty arm;
God's reward is with God, and God's recompense before God.

¹¹ God will feed the flock like a shepherd, gather the lambs in God's arms,
carry them in God's bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

- **Luke 1:24-45**

Some time later, Elizabeth conceived. She went into seclusion for five months, ²⁵ saying, "Our God has done this for me. In these days, God has shown favor to us and taken away the disgrace of our having no children."

²⁶ Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. ²⁸ Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, "Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!"

²⁹ Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel's greeting meant. ³⁰ The angel went on to say to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. ³¹ You'll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus – 'Deliverance.' ³² His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, ³³ to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end."

³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have never been with a man?”

³⁵ The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you – hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. ³⁶ Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ Nothing is impossible with God.”

³⁸ Mary said, “I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say.” With that, the angel left her.

³⁹ Within a few days, Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth.

⁴¹ As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? ⁴⁴ The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who believed that what our God said to her would be accomplished!”

The Word of the Lord / **Thanks be to God.**

Prayer for the Week:

God, you shape our dreams.
As we put our trust in you
may your hopes and desires
be ours,
and we your expectant people.
Amen.

Source: *A New Zealand Prayer Book*; p. 464

December Library Blessing:



**God’s dream and destination
is a day when all flesh
in all places
is sensitive – receptive – welcoming
to torrents – freshets – cataracts – floods
and deluges and inundations
of the Spirit.
Thomas John Carlisle**

