

## Living Out God's Call to Joy and to Justice

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### **THIS WEEK – December 14-20**

To submit a Prayer Request for the Monday Message:

- ✓ text or email Pastor Kathy (512-466-5662; [fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com](mailto:fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com)) by Sunday evening
- ✓ email the church office ([fpchurch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fpchurch@sbcglobal.net)) by Sunday evening
- ✓ give Pastor Kathy a written prayer request on Sunday morning
- ✓ fill out one of the Prayer Request cards in the pews and place it in the Offering Plate

### **PRAYER REQUESTS AND UPDATES**

- Pat Rossow is in Room 720 at Mission Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 1013 S. Bryan Road, Mission (across the Expressway from Mission Hospital). She is working on regaining strength and mobility.
  - Sher Wilkes requests prayers of consolation for the family and friends of her dear friend Sandra Gaulke, who died last week.
  - Jack and Carole Harriff request prayers of consolation for the family and friends of Jack's brother, Jim, who died suddenly on the morning of December 14 following a fall. Jim's wife is Suzi and his son is Michael.
  - Jack and Carole also request prayers for Jack's brother David, who has end-stage Parkinson's, and his wife, Gaila.
  - Emmanuel Tabali reports that his father, Bernard, has been cleared by his Austin doctors to return to the Valley following lengthy treatment for a chronic leg wound. The family is planning a Celebration of Thanksgiving on Saturday, January 3, 2026, to which the congregation is invited. Look for more details in coming weeks.
  - Lou Helt remains at the South Texas Health System hospital (former McAllen Medical) being treated for complications from a recent surgical procedure. She hopes to transfer to long-term rehab soon. 650-408-0062. Cards can be sent to Brookridge Senior Living, 1301 W. Ridge Road, Apt. 229, Pharr, 78577.
  - Prayers of thanksgiving that Ixya Rivera Cortez, Caly Fernandez's granddaughter, had her oral surgery last week and it went well.
  - Margie Karst reports that her sister Gail Keyes continues to experience uncomfortable side effects from new medications. Gail remains at home. 3334 Country Club Drive, Edinburg, TX 78542.
  - Jesse Pena requests prayers for his grandmother, who is not doing well.
  - Sher Wilkes requests renewed prayers for Jeff and Mary Ellen Schneider, both of whom are experiencing health challenges.
  - Gale Ryan requests prayers for Katie McConell, who is in Stage 4 kidney failure.
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**THIS WEEK'S MOMENT OF BEAUTY** – members and friends of the Berliner Stadtmission in a department store in 2014: [GLORIA! - CHRISTMAS FLASHMOB IN BERLIN](#)

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Many thanks to all who participated in this year's Su Casa de Esperanza **Angel Tree** project. And thanks to Ann Williams, LeAnna Morse, and Miranda Prater for getting the gifts delivered.
  - Looking for opportunities to enjoy music performances this season? There will be two **Student Recitals** in the FPC Sanctuary this week. The congregation is invited to attend:
    - Tuesday, December 16 at 6:00 p.m. Piano and Voice Students of Ale Pacheco from PSJA T. Jefferson Early College High School.
    - Sunday, December 21 at 6:00 p.m.: Studio 7 piano and voice students of Cecilia Molina.
  - If you would like to order a **Poinsettia** in honor or memory of a loved one, please contact the Church Office this week; [fpchurch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fpchurch@sbcglobal.net); 956-682-2836. Poinsettias may be taken home after the Christmas Eve worship service.
  - FPC Session Member Caly Fernandez, in her work as Director of **The House of Love and Justice**, invites the congregation to assist with a **Food Drive** to feed local communities. Donations can be placed on the shelves in the church narthex. Items most needed are:

○ Canned meats	○ Canned soups
○ Pasta	○ Spaghetti sauce
○ Rice	○ Canned vegetables
○ Dry beans	○ Canned fruits
○ Peanut butter and jelly	○ Cooking oil
○ Granola bars	○ Oatmeal
  - Former FPC members **James and Vera Barnes** invite the congregation to a celebration of their **70<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary** on Sunday, December 21 following each of the morning worship services (9:00 and 11:00) at St. John's Episcopal Church on N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street. No gifts, please. Cards may be mailed to 4612 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, McAllen 78504.
  - **Christmas Eve Worship** will be at 6:00 on Wednesday, December 24 in the Sanctuary and streaming to Facebook Live.
  - **December 28 Worship** will be a Session-led service in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 10:30, including breakfast, conversation, and an art activity.
  - **Advent Devotionals** based on this year's theme: *What Do You Fear? Insisting on Hope This Advent*, can be picked up in the narthex or requested from the church office. There are large-print versions available upon request.
  - **Space for God** is taking a Winter Break and will resume on Thursday, January 8 at 10:00 in the Parlor. The group will finish its discussion of *How We Learn to Be Brave* by Mariann Budde.
  - **Sunday School** is being held during Advent and meets at 9:00 each Sunday morning in the Parlor. Class discussions center on Advent artworks from *A Sanctified Art*.
  - The Congregational Care team, under the leadership of Kathryn Henry, oversees a **Congregational Card Ministry**. There are cards available in the Narthex; completed notes may be returned to the church to be addressed, stamped, and mailed.
  - To join the **Chancel Choir**, contact Robert Garza, FPC Choir Director, at 956-720-2301 or [rob\\_grza10@yahoo.com](mailto:rob_grza10@yahoo.com). Practice is at 7:30 p.m. each Wednesday in the Choir Room.
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## **CALENDAR**

- Monday, December 15, 11:00 a.m.: Staff Meeting
- Tuesday, December 16: 6:00 p.m.; Student Recital; Sanctuary
- Wednesday, December 17, 7:30 p.m.: Choir Practice; Choir Room
- Sunday, December 21, 9:00 a.m.: Sunday School; Parlor
- Sunday, December 21, 10:30 a.m.: Advent 4 Worship; Sanctuary and Facebook Live
- Sunday, December 21, 6:00 p.m., Studio 7 Winter Recital; Sanctuary – all are invited
- Wednesday, December 24, 6:00 p.m.: Christmas Eve Worship; Sanctuary and Facebook Live

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## **SESSION HIGHLIGHTS – DECEMBER 14 STATED MEETING**

- Present: Mike Hudler, Dana Friedman, Caly Fernandez, Lita Simpson, Kathy Garfield, Moderator Kathy Escandell. Excused: Bernard Tabali, Nadine Force, Joe Massey, Clerk Nancy Pruneda. Kathryn Henry was present as Acting Clerk of Session.
- The meeting was opened with prayer and began with lunch and fellowship.
- Received reports from Treasurer Dana Friedman, Acting Clerk Kathryn Henry, and Moderator Kathryn Escandell.
- Discussed the need for childcare during worship. While the Nursery is undergoing renovation, the children's area of Fellowship Hall will be expanded to include sufficient space, seating, and supplies. The Session will work to meet Best Practices guidelines of having two adults present by hiring a staff person who is consistently present and asking congregational volunteers to sign up for particular weeks.
- Approved 2025 bonuses for church staff and choir members, to be paid for with funds from the Youth Account.
- Received reports from Finance, Congregational Care, and Christian Education.
- Received an update on remediation work to Children's Bereavement Center rooms.
- Approved using the shelves in the Narthex for food donations to House of Love and Justice.
- The meeting was closed with prayer.

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## **December Anniversaries**

Dana and Mauricia Friedman (12/16)

Erik and Cassie (Vorbach) Vose

John and Melinda Wright

## **December Birthdays**

4 – Joyce Magee

10 – Doug Schneider

27 – Ann-Maree Freeland

6 – Rev. O'Quin Kelly

11 – Ansen Seale

28 – Jesse Peña

9 – Sadie Garza

13 – Felipe Salinas

29 – Amanda Wright

Jeff Schneider

14 – Carolyn Landrum

31 – Eng Parker

20 – Ezequiel Bautista

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## FINANCIAL REPORT THROUGH NOVEMBER

2025	Revenue	Expenses	Net
MTD (Nov.)	\$25,853.86	\$22,719.84	+\$3,134.02
YTD	\$232,622.81	\$342,942.58	-\$110,319.77

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## READINGS FOR DECEMBER 21 – ADVENT 4: *When you're afraid, give me your hand.*

- **Isaiah 41:5-10**

<sup>5</sup>The coastlands have seen and are afraid;  
the ends of the earth tremble;  
they have drawn near and come.

<sup>6</sup>Each one helps the other,  
saying to one another, "Take courage!"

<sup>7</sup>The artisan encourages the goldsmith,  
and the one who smooths with the hammer encourages the one who strikes the anvil,  
saying of the soldering, "It is good,"  
and they fasten it with nails so that it cannot be moved.

<sup>8</sup>But you, Israel, my servant,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen,  
the offspring of Abraham, my friend;

<sup>9</sup>you whom I took from the ends of the earth  
and called from its farthest corners,  
saying to you, "You are my servant;  
I have chosen you and not cast you off";

<sup>10</sup>do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be afraid, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you; I will help you;  
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

- **Gospel:**

### Matthew 1:18-25

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, <sup>[b]</sup> and he named him Jesus.

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

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## POEM FOR THE WEEK –

Our Advent series, “What Do You Fear? Insisting on Hope This Advent” includes poems by Rev. Sarah A. Speed for each week’s theme and Scripture. These poems will be used as our Monday Message weekly prayers through Epiphany.

Week 4 Theme: **When You’re Afraid, Give Me Your Hand**

### Tethered

When we were children, we fell asleep  
with walkie talkies tucked under our pillows.  
All that separated us was a bathroom,  
a hallway, a few feet of empty space,  
but as children, even small distances can feel like miles.

So after the parents whispered prayers over our skinned knees  
and spelling tests, after they kissed our sweaty foreheads  
and tucked us into bed,  
we’d pull the walkie talkies out from under our pillows.  
We’d roll the dial on the top of the transceiver.  
We’d sputter that invisible tether to life.

And with a few crackles in the quiet of the night,  
you’d whisper my name.  
I’d press down the button.  
I’d promise I was close.

As an adult, I don’t know what ever happened  
to those blue-grey walkie talkies.  
But I know,  
that even today,  
if the monsters in the closet feel too real,  
and you whisper my name,  
I promise I’ll be close.

Source: *Prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed / A Sanctified Art LLC / sanctified art.org*

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## ON-GOING INFORMATION

**WORSHIP LINK:** Link for Facebook Live streaming worship services:

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=first%20presbyterian%20church%2C%20mcallen%2C%20tx>.

**ZOOM LINK:** Link for all FPC Zoom meetings:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86050357489?pwd=VkhqODg0NjlFS2VTSm91UFFOSjVjQT09>

Meeting ID: 860 5035 7489 Passcode: 912217

**CHURCH WEBSITE:** <https://www.mcallenfpc.org/>

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## **ON-GOING LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

- Many people come to the church for food and hygiene bags. To help with that ministry, make a financial contribution or purchase any of these food items for our cupboard:
    - peanut butter crackers
    - tuna packets
    - fruit cups / applesauce
    - potted meat / Vienna sausages
    - protein bars
    - cereal bars
    - beef jerky
    - bottled water
  - **Face masks** are available in the Narthex for anyone who would like to mask up during worship.
  - **“Leave a Prayer / Take a Blessing”**. A table in the Library has materials to write a prayer and post it on the bulletin board. Prayers can be shared or private. Printed blessings are available.
  - The **church staff** holds weekly meetings on Monday morning. If you have an item for the staff to discuss, please send it to [fpchurch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fpchurch@sbcglobal.net) or [fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com](mailto:fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com).
  - There are 2025-2026 **Presbyterian Planning Calendars** available from the church office.
  - **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** serves people impacted by disasters of all types. If you would like to support the work of PDA, you can do so here: <https://pda.pcusa.org/>
  - **Church Office Hours** are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday, or by appointment.
  - How to reach Pastor Kathy: [fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com](mailto:fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com); 512-466-5662
  - How to reach the church office: [fpchurch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fpchurch@sbcglobal.net)
  - All mail for the church should be sent to P.O. Box 1029, McAllen, TX 78505.
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## **ON-GOING PRAYER REQUESTS:**

- Spud Brown requests prayers for the well-being of the FPC congregation and the world.
- Estelle Davenport; The Gardens at Brookridge; 1201 W. Ridge Road, Apt. 214, Pharr, TX 78577.
- Crystal Simpson and her daughter Emi Williams; 13330 West Rd., Apt. 237; Houston, TX 77041.
- Mauricia Friedman; 7505 North 33<sup>rd</sup> Street; McAllen 78504.
- Nadine Force; 820 North 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, McAllen, 78501. Phone: 956-532-8978
- Lee and Mary Lou Anderson; 2600 S Finley Rd., Apt. 3609, Lombard, IL 60148.
- Amanda Snoke (Kathy Garfield’s daughter).
- Prayers of continued healing and strength for Kathy Garfield’s cousin, Dan Winn.
- Ellen Boyd; Brookridge Senior Living; 1301 W. Ridge Road; Pharr, TX 78577.
- Margie Karst; 3334 Country Club, Edinburg, TX 78542.
- Spud and Jan Brown; 208 E. Kiwi Street; McAllen, Tx 78504
- Ruth Groves; Brookridge Senior Living; 1301 W. Ridge Road; Pharr, 78577.
- Elizabeth Gearhart; 9601 Union Road; Plymouth, IN 46563
- Rita Cochrane
- Jesse Peña requests prayers for his sister Susan.
- Dick and Gwyn Kozma; 15 Hawthorne Drive, Newnan, GA 30263.
- Prayers for Chris and Kelly Leonard and their nephew Grant.
- Donna Rowland, David’s mother who is experiencing health and memory challenges.
- Prayers for continued stroke recovery for David Massey, son of Joe and Jinny.
- Rev. Jacob Lee and First Korean Presbyterian Church, McAllen.
- Cassidy Joule, friend of Sher Wilkes, who has been diagnosed with breast cancer.
- Marilyn Travis, wife of Andrea Hudler’s father Paul.
- Dan Eggers
- Melinda Wright

- Duke Dashbach
  - Sharon Willets; 316 Hazlett Ave., Wheeling, WV 26003.
  - 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.
  - Carl Walborg, son of Shirley Pippin's good friend Mary Ann Walborg, diagnosed with cancer.
  - Connor Magee, Mark and Joyce Magee's grandson.
  - Mary Ann Walborg, good friend of Shirley Pippin, as she deals with health and cognitive issues.
  - Prayers for peace in the Middle East.
  - Cisco Villa
  - Anthony Trevino
  - Stephanie McCrory
  - Prayers for all who are hungry or lonely or without shelter this day.
  - The people of the *colonias*.
  - Prayers for the people of Cameroon. PDA link: <https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/cameroon/>
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**A DECEMBER BLESSING:**



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May the God of hope  
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Alleluia!

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