

As we journey through the season of Advent toward the celebration of Christmas, I am reminded of Mary and Joseph finding no room at the inn. Their homelessness was forced on them by a capricious king who wanted a census. Everyone had to go to their family's home town. Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Almost everyone in that time lived on the edge. They made enough to supply their daily needs, but something as unexpected as an edict to travel and stay in the local hotel was a cost they were not prepared to have to pay. I'm sure they were not the only people who found themselves on the edge of ruin.

Jesus came into our midst in the exact opposite of the way we expect a king to be born. No palace grandeur. No opulence. Born a field or a barn, Jesus' bed was a feeding trough. He came as the most humble. He came to all of us.

In this United States, the wealthiest country on earth, CBS News reports that over 60% of people live paycheck to paycheck. There is no margin for error. There are no extra funds for a medical emergency, a car repair, or a layoff. If we are caught like Mary and Joseph, we can trust that God will provide a way. If we are fortunate enough to have an abundance, I pray that we will be moved to share.

Can we give thanks for God's gift? Can we give gifts to those in need?

Pastor Ray

Sweet Street 2023

It was much warmer stuffing the bags with candy than passing them out this year. We stuffed 672 bags full of candy and still ran out on this cold and blustery Halloween night. Even though it was a frosty night, it was great to see all the kids having fun in their costumes and getting all that Halloween candy—another successful Sweet Street in the history books. Thank you to everyone who helped stuff the bags with candy.

And a great big thank you to those who braved the cold:

Dianna Minick
Ross & Tim
Clyde & Karin
Diana Schmiedeke
John & Sarah
Cindy
Ray





December 3 God Is Like a Fort
December 10 God Is Like a Gardener
December 17 God Is Like a River
December 24 God Is Like Light
December 31 Ross Tomlinson preaching

D



DECEMBER

Kum Ba Yah aka Kum Ba Zoom

We meet every Wednesday on ZOOM for fellowship, study and prayer. 7:00 PM. The link to the Zoom Meeting is sent in the Wednesday eMail each week.

Kum Ba Yah topics:

December 6 Genesis 15
December 13 Genesis 16
December 20 Genesis 17
December 27 No KBZ

Adult Sunday School

Sundays at 9:30am on Zoom and in Person!

December 3 4 Horsemen: Criticism
December 10 4 Horsemen: Contempt
December 17 4 Horsemen: Defensiveness
December 24 No Sunday School
December 31 4 Horsemen: Stonewalling

BACKPACK PROGRAM

We are grateful for the leadership of Dave Foster and Janice Johnson who organize our weekly food program with children at Roosevelt Elementary School. Each week since the 2023-2024 school year has started the number of students receiving backpacks for the weekend has increased. We started with 41 and the last week of Oct it was up to 52. So far for the year of 2023 we have delivered **1,059** backpack bags to Roosevelt Elementary School.

If you have not helped with this ministry before and want info please get a hold of Dave Foster or the office.



MISSION COMMITTEE

The Mission Committee met on October 17, 2023. They decided to give in Local Missions this month **\$300.00 to The Friends of Miami Public Library for "Dolly Pardon Imagination Library"** and **\$1000.00 to the Food Pantry here at First Presbyterian Church.**

The Mission program is sustained in part by gifts from the Myers Sisters bequest as well as gifts from members. You can designate gifts to "Local Mission" or "Global Mission".

The Deacon's Shoe ministry has already given out **44** pairs of shoes since the beginning of the year.

Food Pantry: Since the beginning of the year the food pantry has handed out **512** bags of food through the end of October. With **91** bags given out in the month of October alone.



A Great Big Thank You
&
God Bless You!

To the Dollar General Store
on East Steve Owens Blvd
(by the Turnpike)

For their generous donations to the
Food Pantry.



Reverse Advent Calendar

Advent begins **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD** this year.
DECEMBER 24th will end the season as we celebrate the
birth of Jesus.

Here's an idea that that can help so many people.

To get started....find an empty box.
Each Day of Advent add an item.



On December 24th, bring your box to the Christmas Eve Service and we will take it to
the local Food Pantry at the Presbyterian Church!

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| December 3 | Mac & Cheese | December 18 | Granola Bars |
| December 4 | 1 lb. Dried Pinto Beans | December 19 | Cup of Fruit |
| December 5 | 1 lb. Dry Rice | December 20 | Saltine Crackers |
| December 6 | Spaghetti Sauce | December 21 | Applesauce |
| December 7 | Package of Pasta | December 22 | Can of Vegetable Soup |
| December 8 | Can of Corn | December 23 | Can of Mixed Veggies |
| December 9 | Can of Green Beans | December 24 | Can of Chicken |
| December 10 | Can of Pork & Beans | | |
| December 11 | Can of Tuna | | |
| December 12 | Package of Ramen Noodle | | |
| December 13 | Can of Chicken Noodle Soup | | |
| December 14 | Can of Chili | | |
| December 15 | Jar of Peanut Butter | | |
| December 16 | Box of Instant Oatmeal | | |
| December 17 | Small box of Raisins | | |

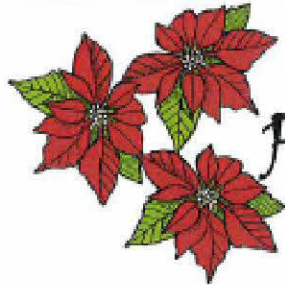
DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 10-12 Food Pantry	2
3 1st Day of Advent  9:15 am Breakfast 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship Fellowship	4 10-12 Food Pantry	5 10-12 Food Pantry	6 10-12 Food Pantry 7:00 KumBaZoom	7 10-12 Food Pantry 2:30 Backpack packing 7:00 GA	8 10-12 Food Pantry	9
10 9:15 am Breakfast 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship Fellowship 11:30 Choir 11:30 Deacons	11 10-12 Food Pantry	12 10-12 Food Pantry 11:00 Mission Committee Mtg 7:00 Session Mtg	13 10-12 Food Pantry 2:30 Backpack packing 7:00 KumBaZoom	14 10-12 Food Pantry 7:00 GA	15 10-12 Food Pantry	16 9-2  Deacon's Christmas Basket distribution
17 9:15 am Breakfast 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship Fellowship 11:30 Choir	18 10-12 Food Pantry	19 10-12 Food Pantry	20 10-12 Food Pantry 7:00 KumBaZoom	21 10-12 Food Pantry 7:00 GA	22 10-12 Food Pantry	23
24 Christmas Eve 7pm 	25 Office Closed 	26 10-12 Food Pantry	27	28 10-12 Food Pantry 7:00 GA	29 10-12 Food Pantry	30
31 9:15 am Breakfast 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship Fellowship 						



Jeraldine Wilcox12/2 Bill Neill12/7
 Richard Whalen12/6 David Prince12/12
 David Foster12/7 Diana Schmiedeke12/13

*Should your name be here?
 Please let the office know your birth date so we can include you!*



Poinsettia Dedications

If you would like to sponsor a Sanctuary Poinsettia this year,
Please complete this form and return it to the church office by 12/17
Poinsettias Sponsorships will cost \$18.00 each.

Please have form turned in by December 17th.

Your name as you would like it printed in the Christmas Bulletin:

Dedication as you would like it printed in the Christmas Bulletin:

For example: In Memory of Selma Mae Thomas

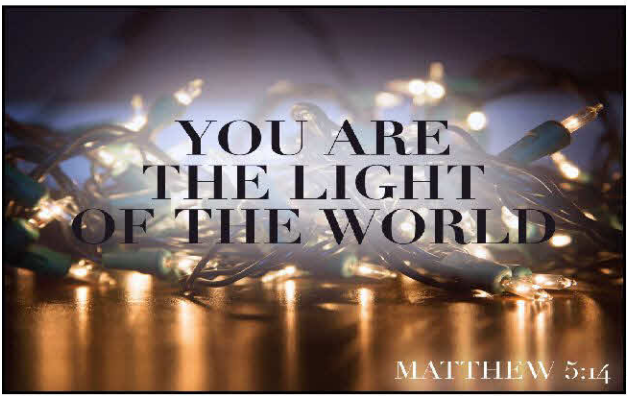
I will take my Poinsettia(s) with me after worship on the 24th.

I will be leave my poinsettia at the church to (possibly)
be delivered to shut ins & nursing homes.

Servers in the Lord's House		
	Coffee Host	Backpack
December 3	Pizza & Greening the Church	Dec. 7 Chuck & Kit Ulrey
December 10	Open	Dec. 13 * Diana S. & Cindy Holt
December 17	Open	Dec. 21 Holiday Break
December 24	No Morning Service See you at Candlelight service tonight!	Dec. 28 Holiday Break
December 31		*Dec. 13 is a Wednesday
Please call the office or talk to Pastor Ray to sign up for servers slots!		

**2023 Fall Presbytery Meeting/Retreat
Grace Goodeagle**

Grace attended the EOP meeting held November 17-18 at Sequoia Lodge. The first day the keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Paul Burns, who spoke on "Rethinking Your Attachments: A Step toward Spiritual Health". Grace attended two workshops - Holistic Prayer and State of the Church. On the second day reports were heard and action taken on matters coming before us. Rev, Dr. Jim Miller, Retired from First Pres- Tulsa, gave the Worship Sermon " How Do You Spell Eschatology". The next Moderator and Vice Moderator, Elder Melinda Hunt and Rev. Rebecca \Weston, were installed. Oklahoma's three Presbyteries may become one. Training classes will be offered for Clerks of Sessions and Treasurers. Tri-Presbytery meeting will be May 31-June 1 in Stillwater.





**Advent Begins
Sunday, December 3rd**



**Hanging of the Greens
Sunday, December 3rd
After morning service**



**Deacon's Christmas Basket Distribution
Saturday, December 16th
9am - 2pm**



**No Morning Service
Candlelight Service
Sunday, December 24th
7:00 pm**



**New Year's Eve
Sunday, December 31st**

Pledge Cards

Pledge cards for 2024 have been mailed. Your financial commitment to the ministry at First Presbyterian Church is vital as we plan for the year ahead. The budgeting process is underway, and we already know that insurance, utilities, and Food Pantry costs will see significant increases.

Pray for us and with us as we discern God's direction for the coming year.

Scripture Reader Schedule

December 3	Grace
December 10	Karin
December 17	Diana S.
December 24	Clyde
December 31	Janet
January 7	John
January 14	Ross
January 21	Nathaniel
January 28	Tim

Please let Ross or Pastor Ray know if you cannot read the scriptures
the week you are scheduled.
Thank you for your service in the House of the Lord

Spaghetti Dinner & Advent Wreath Making





Luke 2: 10-14 NRSV

10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

14"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"



*The First Presbyterian Church
1410 N.E. Veterans Blvd.
Miami, OK 74354*