



First Presbyterian Church

The Cross and Crown



December 2018

Extending God's Grace throughout Northeast

Pastor

Rev. Dr. Jerry Carpenter

Session members:

Class of 2018

Ronny Knight and Becky Poe

Class of 2019

John Clark

Class of 2020

Armel Crocker and Jane Els

Treasurer

Jerry Poe

Contact us:

Tina Hammer, Secretary

PO Box 493

301 S. Walnut St.

Winnsboro, TX 75404

Office: 903-342-3011

Fax: 903-342-3011

Email: firstpres@peoplescom.net

revdrjerry@peoplescom.net

Office hours: M-Th, 9-noon

FPC Website:

www.easttexasgrace.org

Cross and Crown articles:

firstpres@peoplescom.net

PASTOR'S PEN: REV. DR. JERRY CARPENTER

December has arrived at last. The end of the year is near. A new year is soon to begin. December brings with it the season of Advent. The culture in which we live may begin Christmas music and decorations on the day after Halloween but we in the church reserve that celebration for Christmas Eve and following. We observe the season of Advent this year on December 2 with the First Sunday of Advent. Three more Sundays in Advent follow and then comes Christmas Eve. We begin a 4 week season of watching and waiting for the coming of the Messiah and we do not begin to celebrate his coming until his coming actually happens on Christmas Eve.

Anticipation is a reward in itself. When we have an exciting opportunity in the future, the feeling of anticipating what it may be like is as rewarding as the actual event itself in many ways. Many of you know that my wife and I love to travel. We have been to 48 of the 50 states, to most of the Canadian provinces, and to Europe several times. I have been to the Middle East twice also without my wife accompanying me. For each journey that is planned, a planning period of six months to a year happens to be sure to make all the details of the trip happen. Before the advent of computers, I would write to travel departments in states asking for information that would be mailed to me. I would compile all of the literature I received and begin calling and making reservations and make an itinerary for us to follow as we began the journey we had anticipated. For each day of the journey, I would have multiple pieces of paper for hotel reservations and things we wanted to see along the journey. As I planned where we would go and what we would see, I enjoyed traveling to those places in my mind before we even left for the trip. That anticipation of the places we would go was almost as exciting as actually going.

That is part of the reason why we celebrate Advent for 4 weeks and we do not just launch into Christmas at the very start of December. We need 4 weeks to think about where we are going on the journey to Bethlehem once more so that we can grasp the meaning behind the event we will witness in our spirits again. We need to hear from the Prophets of old as they spoke about the coming

of the Messiah. We need to look in on Mary and Joseph as they struggled with the news that Mary would give birth to this special baby. We need to hear those old stories read once more and listen with new ears so we will experience Christmas anew in our hearts. Yes, it is a very ancient story and we know it by heart but it is new each year as we hear it told again, maybe this time in a new way.

I will be preaching from the Prophets each Sunday in December, some of which we hardly ever read in worship. Yes, we occasionally hear from Jeremiah or Isaiah but we almost never read from the books of Malachi, Zephaniah, or Micah. We will read from them and hear the Gospel reading that goes with them and try to see what each of them may have known in their hearts when they tried to foresee the coming of the Messiah.

Will you be in worship this Advent season? Will you allow the story of the Christ Child to enter your heart once more and liven you anew? You are needed in worship as we hear and sing and proclaim the coming of the birth of our Savior once more. Join your church family each week as we light the candles for Advent and sing the songs that remind us of the mystery and majesty of the birth of the holy child.

ATTENTION: NEW PRAYER REQUESTS MONTHLY

In order to keep our prayer requests current, our prayer list will start fresh at the beginning of each month. To keep your prayer request in the bulletin, write it on the back of an offering envelope, the attendance sheet or a piece of paper (please make sure your name is on it) or contact the church office, firstpres@peoplescom.net or 903-342-3011. We do not need the reason, unless it is death or an accomplishment, which go under a different heading. Also, please give relationship to you so others know who they are praying for. And **PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY.**

As our prayers are answered, we give God thanks. For those with continued needs, we continue to pray.



Noisy Offering
December: Winnsboro Volunteer Fire Dept.
January: TBD

December Sermon Titles:

Dec. 2	First Sunday of Advent Jeremiah 33:14-16 "In between Time"
Dec. 9	Second Sunday of Advent Malachi 3:1-4 "Washing Up"
Dec. 16	Third Sunday of Advent Zephaniah 3: 14-20 "A Song of Joy"
Dec. 23	Fourth Sunday of Advent Micah 5: 2-5a "Birth of a Promise"
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols
Dec. 30	First Sunday of Christmas Luke 2: 41-52 "Looking for Jesus in All the Wrong Places"

Attendance:

October 28—30
November 4—23
November 11—26
November 18—18
November 25—34

December birthdays and anniversaries:
(Please notify the office if I do not have your birthday)

3—Rounseville/Werner anniversary

6—Becky Poe

9—Dan Mickel

13—Rev. Jerry Carpenter

28—Chris Holloman

28—Carrie Russell



Jane's Journey

Come, Lord Jesus!

Advent is here. And that means Jesus is coming! And for some folks it also means one semester of school is over. And, believe it or not, I'm about to connect those two things.

Armel Crocker and I just finished two more classes at Austin Seminary toward our Certificate in Ministry. We've now completed four of the seven classes we need and we're over half-way finished.

The class we have both enjoyed the most has been Church History. As the class was winding down I decided that I would see if I could condense the history of Christianity into a timeline that I could look at in one view. Just for fun. That's the kind of geek I am. The resulting scroll is about 14 feet long but it shows all the major events and people from the martyrdom of Stephen in 30 AD to the Confession of Barmen in 1934. Along the way we read bits and pieces of some of the most fascinating writings in Christendom, some famous and some hidden—like the Martin Luther's 95 Theses and the 1963 paper from the Quaker church that formally accepted homosexuality in 1963.

One of the things Armel and I both took away from this class is how much of church history wasn't about Jesus at all. A lot of it was really about power. Some of the popes were actually not nice people at all; in fact a couple of them were money hungry murderers. Certainly the church went astray once in a while.

But then there would be a reformation and the church would readjust its priorities. Someone would remember the details of what we are about: we're not here for money or power but for the lessons of the sermon he gave on the mount, remembering his words to be humble, to be gentle, to be nice to each other; yet always looking for Jesus to come again. Always, always looking for Jesus to come again.

And here we are again. Two thousand years later. Looking again.

Could he be right here in front of us?

I'm one of those people who suspects that Jesus sometimes comes to us dressed as the needy and then waits to see how we react to him. He basically told us he would do this in the story in Matthew 25 when he said, "When you did it to the least of these you did it to me."

We get these opportunities to minister to Jesus every day of the year but especially in the Advent season we think of it in a new way: Come, Lord Jesus. Walk into my life. Welcome.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight
Service 5:00 PM**

General Fund Summary - Jan - Oct 2018			
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Income	\$50,407.05	\$46,583.33	\$3,823.72
Expense	\$52,092.32	\$51,402.50	\$689.82
Net	(\$1,685.27)		

Note: Bank balance 10/31/2018 was \$51,274.18. Restricted funds totaled \$14,358.22, while unrestricted funds totaled \$36,915.96. (Uncleared checks total \$22,735.85 leaving \$34,180.11 available for normal bills.)

News from the Session

At our November Session meeting, we quickly dispatched our routine business matters and then focused our attention on making plans for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. By unanimous vote, it was decided to do "Lessons In Carols" like we did last year. In addition, Pastor Jerry will serve Communion, and a special offering will be collected. The purpose is to establish a Pastor Discretionary fund.

Special Budget workshop meetings are scheduled for the Session during November to develop our Church's 2019 Operating Budget.

John Clark showed the plan he has for making a park bench for the Winnsboro City Park Bench competition. He is looking for volunteers to decorate/paint our entry.

Pastor Jerry had a busy month: attended a Small-Church Pastor's Retreat at Mo-Ranch, attended Gilmont fundraiser dinner in Longview, brought Communion to our nursing home residents, and participated in the Community Thanksgiving Service. He is also planning to attend upcoming Winnsboro Pastor Alliance group meetings.

The next Session meeting will be Sunday, December 9th, immediately following our worship service. Everyone is invited to attend as an observer; those wishing to speak at the Session meeting should contact the Clerk of the Session to be put on the agenda.

More Session News next month.....



Lesson four in our continuing study of *God's Promise: I Am With You* by Amy Poling Sutherlun is titled "God with Us When We Seek God." The focus of this lesson is that "God summons God's people, and especially God's leaders, to walk in God's ways and to seek God." Those of us who are participating in this study have certainly gained some scriptural knowledge that gives us strength to move forward in faith through our everyday lives.

It is not too late to join us as we study God's promises. We meet in the Russell Annex at 10:00 a.m. the first Monday of each month. We hope to see you December 3!

We're proud that Jacob Wilson was chosen by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary to write one of their Advent devotions:

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 16, 2018

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 110

- 1 The LORD says to my lord,
 "Sit at my right hand
 until I make your enemies your footstool."
- 2 The LORD sends out from Zion
 your mighty scepter.
 Rule in the midst of your foes.
- 3 Your people will offer themselves willingly
 on the day you lead your forces
 on the holy mountains.
 From the womb of the morning,
 like dew, your youth will come to you.
- 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind,
 "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."
- 5 The Lord is at your right hand;
 he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.
- 6 He will execute judgment among the nations,
 filling them with corpses;
 he will shatter heads
 over the wide earth.
- 7 He will drink from the stream by the path;
 therefore he will lift up his head.

DEVOTIONAL

Jacob G. Wilson, Student Staff, Metro-Urban Institute

Melchizedek calls You priest; You sit at God's right hand; You judge people and nation;
To You I come.
You are Messiah; Christ; Savior and Lord.

Seven verses call You by name:
You are one with the Godhead; both unity and division; completion and resurrection; sabbath of creation; grace upon grace; human and slave, our weakness set free.

You are Perfection.
Enthroned in Psalm:
In honor; in victory; in judgment.
From Holy Mount to lowly stream,
You are there.
From where You sit to where You send:
Your children come.

Lift Your head:
Adventus; parousia; maranatha.

By the path:

Purple and blue; candle and wreath; carol and calendar.

Between memory and hope; between past and present, we wait for Thee already come.

"O *Antiphons: ero cras*," and "O come, O come Emmanuel."

From Zion to footstool heads shatter:

You have come; You are risen; and You will come again!

Advent to Christmastide; four Sundays to five;

One season begets another: one hope begets all joy.

Jesus: You are Priest forever.

I have sworn this and will not change my mind.

PRAYER

Lord, Teach me to remember You as You have remembered me. Let me anticipate my neighbor with love and expect my enemy with kindness. Make me to work in praise and rest in humility. Bring me into light and deliver me from darkness.

Lead me to Your kingdom and save me from my own. Amen.

YOU ARE INVITED

Pastor Jerry and Doris will have a Christmas Open House on Saturday, December 15 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at their house at 501 Oxford Drive in Tyler. You are invited to come visit and enjoy some holiday snacks and see where they live. This is a come and go opportunity to enjoy some holiday cheer in Tyler. We hope you can come.



Music Notes

The Ringers and Singers have been working faithfully in order to share special music for Advent and Christmas Eve. We will continue to meet through the last Sunday of December; then, we will take a little break.

Ringers 9:00 a.m. Sundays

Singers 9:45 a.m. Sundays



Poinsettias for Christmas

The Poinsettias that decorate our church for Christmas will be ordered from Lowe's.

Each plant is \$8.00. If you would like to order one (or more), please fill out the information below and place the sheet in the offering plate with your check made out to Presbyterian Church for the proper amount (please indicate "for poinsettias" on check), or drop it off at the office.

December 9, 2018 will be the last day we accept orders.

Given By: _____

In Honor Of: _____

OR

In Memory of: _____

Total # Plants Ordered: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Poinsettias may be picked up after Christmas Eve Candlelight service.



Pastor appreciation Sunday

December

First Presbyterian, Contacts, Holidays in United States

Dec 2018 (Central Time - Chicago)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
Nolay Offering	C & C due Jane Els 2pm - Bible study @	5:30pm - yoga 6:45pm - Smoking				Decorate church Presbytery, N. Park, 12pm - Al-Anon
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1st Sunday of Communion	Aniv. 10am - PW 2pm - Bible study @	Session reports due 5:30pm - yoga 6:45pm - Smoking		Becky Poe		12pm - Al-Anon
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2nd Sunday of Dan Mickel 12pm - Session	2pm - Bible study @	5:30pm - yoga 6:45pm - Smoking		Rev Jerry Carpenter		10am - Open House 12pm - Al-Anon
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
3rd Sunday of Family Lunch	2pm - Bible study @	5:30pm - yoga 6:45pm - Smoking	Cross & Crown			12pm - Al-Anon
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
4th Sunday of	Christmas Eve office closed 5pm - Candlelight	Christmas Day Office closed			Carrie Russell Chris Holloman	12pm - Al-Anon
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
Nolay Offering	New Year's Eve	New Year's Day Office closed				12pm - Al-Anon