



First Presbyterian Church

The Cross and Crown



December 2020

Extending God's Grace throughout Northeast

Session members:

Class of 2020
Jane Els and Dan Wilson
Class of 2021
Sandy Corder and Kelly Holloman
Class of 2022
Patricia Fields and Slade Weaver
Treasurer
Ronny Knight

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December Worship Schedule

December 6 - Jane Els in the pulpit
December 13 - Jimmy Chapman in the pulpit, communion, Session meeting
December 20 - Christmas Lessons and Carols Service (11:00 as usual), no preacher
December 27 - Jane Els in the pulpit

NOTE: We will not have a Christmas Eve service this year due to our currently low in-person attendance and the assumption that even if members have out of town family for Christmas, they most likely wouldn't attend due to being cautious of COVID spread. INSTEAD, we will have our Lessons and Carols service on December 20 during Sunday morning worship. Those who don't attend in person on Sunday mornings can watch Facebook live either on Sunday or, if you prefer, on Christmas Eve.

December 2020 Revised Common Lectionary for Sundays and Festivals

Second Sunday of Advent—December 6

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

Third Sunday of Advent—December 13

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11
Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b–55
1 Thessalonians 5:16–24
John 1:6–8, 19–28

Fourth Sunday of Advent—December 20

2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16
Luke 1:46b–55 or Psalm 89:1–4, 19–26
Romans 16:25–27
Luke 1:26–38

First Sunday of Christmas—December 27

Isaiah 61:10—62:3
Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4–7
Luke 2:22–40

**December birthdays &
anniversaries:**

**(Please notify the office if I do not
have your birthday)**

28 Carrie Russell

28 Chris Holloman

Attendance:

November 1—14

November 8—17

November 15—15

November 22—13

Session Highlights

The Session met for a stated meeting on November 8. Following are highlights of that meeting.

- The Session is seeking a permanent solution for pastoral leadership for our congregation. It has been explained by Presbytery that there are many churches in the same boat, and part time pastors are few and far between. We are trying to figure out how to go about finding someone. Meanwhile...
- The Worship committee (Kelly Holloman and Patricia Fields) continues to work hard to provide for Sunday morning worship. Again, available ordained ministers are hard to come by, but we are blessed to have commissioned lay ministers Jane Els to preach and Jimmy Chapman to preach, serve communion and moderate our meetings. Since they aren't available every Sunday, we will continue to have a scriptures and hymns service once a month. Also see NOTE on the first page for Christmas Eve information.
- The Session authorized Admin/Finance chair Slade Weaver and Treasurer Ronny Knight to proceed with the 2020 Pledge drive. They will also be working on the budget for next year.
- Building and Grounds chair Dan Wilson noted that the hedge trimming party went well and that the church grounds look good. He also noted that the tenants in the manse were moving out.
- The InReach/OutReach committee discussed a couple of programs. Since we currently have no Sunday school going on, Sandy Corder introduced a study by PC-USA entitled "Just Eating: Practicing Our Faith at the Table" This would be an online study and would begin in the new year. Keep an eye out for further information. Jane Els discussed the "Living Room Conversations" program. The session will learn more about this program after the holidays.
- The Session approved Jane Els, along with Armel Crocker, to train newly elected session members Alice McGregor and Ronny Knight before their examination and installation/ordination in January (date TBA).
- Scheduled the next stated meeting for December 13.



Due to low attendance, poinsettias will not be for sale this year, however, feel free to purchase one to bring to the church. Please take it home after service on the 27th.



Jane's Journey

How is it with your soul these days? Someone asked me this tonight. It's not a question you get every day so I had to think about it a little bit. Even though it's probably the most special part of what makes you "**you**" we don't think about our soul very much.

We're in the middle of a pandemic and besides that we just had a really divisive election so things are a little touchy socially right now. It's risky to go out in public. I had to go grocery shopping and ran into John Clark and found myself really reassured to see a friendly face (even if it was behind a mask.) My social life is on the ropes right now.

But the question was about my soul. How is my soul?

I spent most of my day outside today. The weather was perfect. And it was a good day: we accomplished things and had a good time. It was a satisfying day. But my soul. How was my soul? I got to see clouds and the sky. I watched my dogs enjoy the sun and quiet. We had enough food to eat. We are healthy. God has blessed us. I guess the word would be "peaceful." My soul had a peaceful day.

I saw God all around me today since I was outside. But even indoors you can see God in the faces of the people you meet. How does a person get in touch with their soul? A lot of people do it through sound. Music will escort you to another dimension where you can meet that "something that can't be described but only felt"; silence can do the same thing. I have listened to the wind blowing through the pines and known I was hearing thousands of pine needles and wondered what sound the wind makes as it blows past a single pine needle.

We will hear a lot about "home" this year when travel is discouraged for the holidays. The people who yearn for home will face an empty spot in their days, making the best of it with phone calls and Facetime. Where is our soul's home? Is it the church building? Is it inside our heart-inside our body? In a cloud, in the sky? Or is it in that feeling you get that swells up in your throat when you hear Christmas music late at night? Is it that "something" that brings tears to your eyes at the thought of Peace on Earth?

I had a pastor who was fond of saying "Namaste" and her Presbyterian credentials are impeccable. Her interpretation of the Sanskrit word is that she is saying, "Christ who lives in me greets Christ who lives in you." Her soul greets my soul this way. As we approach the Christmas season my soul greets your soul and wishes you the best. Namaste, y'all.

We seem to have "lost" 2 previous members this month:

Hazel Taylor had moved to Oklahoma a couple years ago, but continued to receive the Cross & Crown so she could still know about her church. Last month's issue has been returned marked "vacant-unable to forward" and the phone numbers for her son & daughter are invalid.

Helen Poteet had moved to Seagoville but also continued to receive the Cross & Crown. I was informed that she passed away on 11-17, as they were looking for Pastor Peggy to officiate. As of this writing, I cannot find her obituary or any other details.

Feel Better Fast 5 Quick Meal Time Fixes

Ayurveda has a ton of advice on eating. Lots of it surrounds the ingredients in meals, but there is also a lot of good stuff surrounding the actual act of eating too. Much of the age old advice harks back to times when families gathered around the table for a meal, sharing the day with each other. While our modern life may not be conducive to gathering nightly, adopting some of the wisdom is a really great way of feeling better – fast.

In January, I'll be leading a class on how to add some more spiritual elements to your meal time. Stay tuned for the dates and information on how to order your study along guide from PCUSA.

In the mean time....

1) Sit Down to Eat

Sitting down to eat actually helps enhance the flavors of your meal. Science has even gotten on board with this little gem of wisdom. In a study published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, it was found that taste perception reacts to posture. Standing mutes the taste buds by prompting physical stress. So... sit, relax and really enjoy your food.

2) Say Grace or Express Gratitude

Saying grace is a form of expressing gratitude and science says gratitude is good for us. Other studies have found that more grateful people: report better physical health, are moderately more likely to report engaging in healthy activities, and sleep better and longer." If you're looking for something to say check out these [11 Beautiful Ways To Say Grace](#) for some inspiration.

3) Focus on the Food

One way to reduce the calories in a meal without actually reducing how much you enjoy it is to reduce distractions while eating. Science backs this one up too. A study shows that paying attention only to your food is a way to promote weight loss and maintain it without the need for calorie counting. So, turn off the tv, take a break from work, or put down your book and concentrate on your meal.

4) Drink Sparingly

Ayurveda wisdom says to minimize the amount of water you drink during a meal. A study from Suriname (South America), explains why you may want to adopt this habit. They found that drinking water while eating a doughnut raised blood glucose levels as much as eating a second donut! Drinking thirty minutes before or after the meal, though, showed no similar effect.

5) Slow Down and Enjoy Your Food

When we eat slower, we actually eat less and enjoy it more according to science and Ayurveda. Both agree that psychological and physical differences are apparent between fast and slow consumption. So, slowing down the rate we eat our meals is a quick and easy way to actually enjoy your meal more while eating less.

¹ University of South Florida (USF Innovation). "Posture impacts how you perceive your food." Science Daily. Science Daily, 7 June 2019 <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/06/190607091031.htm>.

² UC Berkeley (John Templeton Foundation by the Greater Good Science Center). "The Science of Gratitude." May 2018 https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper-Gratitude-FINAL.pdf

³ Robinson E, Aveyard P, Daley A, et al. Eating attentively: a systematic review and meta-analysis of the effect of food intake memory and awareness on eating. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2013;97(4):728-742. doi:10.3945/ajcn.112.045245

⁴ Jerry Toelosie, Robert Bipat, Drinking water with consumption of a jelly filled doughnut has a time dependent effect on the postprandial blood glucose level in healthy young individuals, *Clinical Nutrition ESPEN*, Volume 27, P20-23, October, 2018 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clnesp.2018.07.007>>

⁵ Hawton K, Ferriday D, Rogers P, et al. Slow Down: Behavioural and Physiological Effects of Reducing Eating Rate. *Nutrients*. 2018;11(1):50. Published 2018 Dec 27. doi:10.3390/nu11010050

December 2020

First Presbyterian, Contacts, Holidays in United States

Dec 2020 (Central Time - Chicago)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 1st sunday	30	1	2	3	4	5
6 2nd sunday Becky Poe Communion Session	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 3rd sunday	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 4th sunday	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve NO SERVICE OFFICE CLOSED	25 Christmas Day	26
27	28 CARRIE KUSSELL CHRIS HOLLOMAN	29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE OFFICE CLOSED	1 New Year's Day	2