



First Presbyterian Church

The Cross and Crown



December 2021

Extending God's Grace throughout Northeast

Session members:

Class of 2021

Sandy Corder and Kelly Holloman

Class of 2022

Patricia Fields and Slade Weaver

Class of 2023

Ronny Knight and Alice McGregor

Treasurer

Ronny Knight

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Sunday Schedule

December 5 (2nd Sunday of Advent) - Jane Els; communion;

December 12 (3rd Sunday of Advent) - Lessons and Carols (no sermon)

December 19 (4th Sunday of Advent) - Jane Els

Christmas Eve December 24 (5:30 p.m.) - Jane Els; communion

December 26 (1st Sunday of Christmas) - Jimmy Chapman

Session Highlights

The Session met on November 7. It was a long meeting not only taking care of regular business, but also checking off the mundane yearly tasks required by Book of Order, discussing next year's budget, and discussing how to find a pastor. The following are brief highlights. As always you may view the official minutes if you wish. Just ask.

- We are reinstating the Noisy Offering! The bucket will sit next to the offering plate in the Narthex. You may drop in any loose change you wish. This year the offering will go to the Winnsboro Food Pantry.
- We met with Jane Els to discuss what being commissioned to our church means for us. In addition to continuing to fill the pulpit as she has been doing, Jane will be able to serve communion to the congregation. She will also begin taking communion to the elder care facilities.
- Ronny is working on finalizing the 2022 budget. Pledge cards have been sent out and once those are returned, he will have a better idea as to what kind of income to expect.
- A discussion as to how to advertise and find a pastor pursued. Our information has been sent to Austin Seminary who is posting it in a couple of forums. Also they may be having a virtual job fair which we may be able to participate in.
- A congregational meeting has been scheduled for January 9 to hear annual reports.
- Installation of new officers, communion, and the stated session meeting were also scheduled for January 9.
- In the congregational meeting on November 7, John Clark was elected

to serve as Trustee for the class of 2024 and Tricia Clark to serve on Session.



Christmas Joy Offering will be taken on December 19
Christmas Eve Candlelight service, with Communion is at 5:30PM

Looking ahead to January: A congregational meeting has been scheduled for January 9 to hear annual reports, Installation of new officers, Communion, and the stated session meeting.

December 2021 Revised Common Lectionary for Sundays and Festivals

Second Sunday of Advent—December 5

Malachi 3:1–4

Luke 1:68–79

Philippians 1:3–11

Luke 3:1–6

Third Sunday of Advent—December 12

Zephaniah 3:14–20

Isaiah 12:2–6

Philippians 4:4–7

Luke 3:7–18

Fourth Sunday of Advent—December 19

Micah 5:2–5a

Luke 1:46–55 or Psalm 80:1–7

Hebrews 10:5–10

Luke 1:39–45 (46–55)

Nativity of the Lord / Christmas—December 24

Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2–7

Psalm 96:1–13

Titus 2:11–14

Luke 2:1–14 (15–20)

First Sunday of Christmas—December 26

1 Samuel 2:18–20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3:12–17

Luke 2:41–52

December birthdays & anniversaries:

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

6 Becky Poe

28 Carrie Russell

28 Chris Holloman

Attendance:

October 31—9

November 7—16

November 14—9

November 21—15



Jane's Journey

One of the things that has surprised me from this pandemic was how few Christmas cards we got last year. I thought we would get a lot more than usual. Instead, we got fewer. My reasoning went along the lines that people were home more than usual, they had more time on their hands, they had not seen each other in a long time, and perhaps they missed one another. I expected them to reach out to each other in the form of sending cards. Alas, it was not to be. Or maybe it was just me they crossed off their lists.

I have been using the postal system more myself, using my own logic and the above strands of thought. I discovered that I could copy all those cute memes that pop up on Facebook and make greeting cards out of them. It's quite the opposite of what is going on with social media but I'm a kind of retro chick anyway. And I think people get a kick out of opening a letter they get in the mail. You would be surprised at how many people aren't on Facebook or have email. But just about everyone has mail delivery unless they live in a cave.

I went through my phone looking for one of those photos as an example and, instead, found a quote I had saved by the author Rachel Held Evans. She wrote several popular books, among them were Search for Sunday, A Year of Biblical Womanhood and Faith Unraveled. Just when I think all the great thinkers have been found, a new one comes into the front of the stage. The sad thing is that Rachel died in the prime of life just a few years ago, from an allergic reaction to a medication. She was already gaining influence in Christian circles for her writing. There are others out there like her with wisdom of words to express the truths we know in our bones. It's comforting to know that when I don't have the words someone else does. Here's a truth for today from Rachel Held Evans:

“... the gospel doesn't need a coalition devoted to keeping the wrong people out. It needs a family of sinners, saved by grace, committed to tearing down the walls, throwing open the doors, and shouting, “Welcome! There's bread and wine. Come eat with us and talk.” This isn't a kingdom for the worthy; it's a kingdom for the hungry.”

We will be celebrating Communion on December 5th and again on Christmas Eve. Come join us!

Did you just hear that?

By Sandy Corder



Photo by [HARALD PLIESSNIG](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Our senses - Sound

I'm going to continue with the exploration of the senses in relation to spirituality this month by investigating the sense of sound. As I said in my last article, before now, I've rarely given a lot of thought to the fact that my sight, taste, smell, touch and hearing hugely impact my spirituality on a daily basis. When I delved into them through the teaching of Ayurveda, though, I found that they are THE thing I needed to pay attention to the most.

Sound is a very big player in the Bible and in our current mode of worship. But beyond that, folks tend to discount the role that sound plays in our moods, thoughts, and actions. Sound has a profound effect on our physiology that is very often overlooked in our day to day lives. Sounds that we hear are actually vibrations of energy that our ear translates into meaningful information. Whether listening to music or hearing the warning growl of a dog, our bodies are designed to act on the information with chemical reactions. Depending on the sound, these reactions can be invigorating or calming. Consequently, these chemical reactions can either help us attain a spiritual state, or can actually hinder attaining it.

For example, many of us have experienced songs that lift us up and those that bring us to tears in a religious service. The meaning of the words, the flow of the tune, and even the tempo of the piece all have an impact on us. But, let's think beyond music. Let's think about all the sounds that we are encountering on a daily basis. In all homes there are steady hums of fans and appliances, then we layer on more sounds with televisions, radios, pc's and our phones!

Hearing test, anyone?

There are tons of ways to explore how much your senses impact you. One way is to simply take one sense, like sound, and make an intention to pay attention to our ears and what we are exposing our brain to through the use of this sense organ.



Photo by [Elyas Pasban](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Just for one day, observe how much you are impacted by what your ears absorb throughout the day:

- How often are you listening to things during the day? Music? Talk radio? Phone calls? Friends/Coworkers/Family?
- Do you find yourself struggling to pay attention to just one thing when there are competing sounds? Do you get distracted easily by the tv, radio, or other conversations?
- Do you notice the background noise around you? Vibrations, traffic noise, society or nature sounds?
- Did you react mentally or physically to anything you heard today?
- At any time today, did you experience true silence or only the sounds of nature?

Once you know just how much things you hear are impacting you, you can make tiny adjustments like taking sound breaks, changing the tempo or type of music you are listening to, or turning off some “layers” that may be impacting you. The goal is to lessen your exposure to things that will lead you away from your spiritual life.

‘Hear’ anything you want to change?

In our world, man made sounds are everywhere. Many of us rarely take moments to reset and release ourselves from the onslaught of these vibrations. The strain of sounds can contribute to fatigue and stress and is even linked to cardiovascular disease and cognitive impairment ⁽¹⁾. But we don’t have to be a victim of our environment. There

are many things that we can consciously do to ensure that we use sound to benefit us and our spirituality.



Photo by [Aaron Burden](#) on [Unsplash](#)

In relation to the sense of sound, here are some simple things you can do:

- **Change #1** - Lower the volume. Take the volume of your input devices down lower than you normally have it and let your body adjust. If you feel you are straining to hear, adjust it up minutely to the lowest level that works for you.
- **Change #2** - Eat a meal in silence. Take 10 to 20 minutes to be without any added sounds like music, videos, or other folks, etc.
- **Change #3** - Go for a walk and listen to the sounds of nature. Identify the birds, insects, and other wildlife and listen for the sound of the wind in the trees and grasses.
- **Change #4** - Play with tempo - listen to lively music in the morning and gradually slow the beats per minute down throughout the day. End the day with spa music or a guided meditation.

You can do this same set of exercises with all five of your senses - first observing, then changing some small things that you discover are hindering your spirituality. Perhaps you’ll be surprised by how much impact these fundamentally physical senses have on our mind and emotions. Next month, we’ll focus on the sense of smell.

(1) **Burden of disease from environmental noise - Quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe**

Environmental burden of disease from noise in Europe - WHO EURO,7 July 2011| Report

December 2021

First Presbyterian, Contacts, Holidays In United States

Dec 2021 (Central Time - Chicago)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Communion	Becky Poe					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Joy Offering taken					Christmas Eve Day off for Services &	Christmas Day
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
	Cross & Crown	Carmie Russell Chris Holloman			Day off for New New Year's Eve	New Year's Day