CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING—GOD IS WITH US

What was the most perfect gift you ever received? A bike or doll when you were a kid? A video game, perhaps? Maybe it was the day you met your husband, your wife — or looked into the eyes of the newborn baby that someone laid in your arms.

For most of us, the most perfect gift is not necessarily a thing, but something else. Something bigger, deeper, more meaningful. One of the most powerful things that Christians claim is that God saw the great needs of the world and offered a perfect gift, a gift that brought God and humanity closer together. God’s perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ, offered the power of being with us.

According to Matthew’s Gospel, one of the names given to Jesus is Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.”

In Jesus, we receive the perfect gift of God being with us, and of being with those who are often overlooked, left out, vulnerable, or in need. “God is with us,” we proclaim. What a powerful gift, a perfect gift, the gift of... being with. Being with... think about it.

This is one of the reasons we share gifts during Christmas. We, too, want to share the power of being “with” those we love and those in need, by offering gifts like those we give to the Christmas Joy Offering.

When we give to the Christmas Joy Offering, we step forward to be with the young people attending Stillman College, Presbyterian Pan American School, and the Menaul School, recognizing their potential and rejoicing in their talents. We offer the gift of being with them in support of their education and leadership development, knowing that the students of color who attend these schools will soon lead the church and world, receiving our gifts and offering their gifts in return.

We give these gifts because God shows us how powerful it is to “be with.” The power of “with” is the power God shows us in Jesus Christ. God’s perfect gift: Emmanuel, God is with us. Let us share our gifts and celebrate our church leaders — past, present and future.
Ministry Staff

The Rev. Dr. Brent O. Johnston
Pastor/Head of Staff
pastor@firstchurchwichita.org

Joan Aldrich
Parish Nurse
aldrich@firstchurchwichita.org

Geri Doll
Director of Youth Ministry
doll@firstchurchwichita.org

Liz Norris
Director of Children’s Ministry
norris@firstchurchwichita.org

Steve Bixler
Director of Music
bixler@firstchurchwichita.org

Mark Sweeney
Organist
msweeney620@yahoo.com

Gary Huffman
Archivist/Assoc. Organist
huffman@firstchurchwichita.org

Administrative Staff

Michelle Edwards
Administrative Assistant
publications@firstchurchwichita.org

Tharika Munaweera
Bookkeeper
finance@firstchurchwichita.org

Roy Yarbrough
Facilities Manager
facilities@firstchurchwichita.org

Mary Burgett
Economy Corner Manager

Phyllis Robertson
Economy Corner Assistant Manager

Dave Duncan
Whispering Winds Camp Manager
dbduncan@firstchurchwichita.org

Melinda Sears
Clerk of the Session
sj.ml.sears@att.net

Congregational Care

Let Us Focus Our Prayers on These Members:
As a congregation we weekly focus our personal and corporate prayers upon a selection of church members and friends. Let us remember in prayer this month the following: Chris Fox & Shea Kang Hew and family, Esther Harrington, Terry Hawkins, Liz Lang, Carol Seek, Donovan McCall, Dylan Warner, Laci Haas and family, Alexandra & Steve Washburn, Tom & Gerry Winters, Harriet Lewis, Charles Hoke, J.D. Page, Silvia Landers, Mike & Kristen Cardine, Nancy & Steve Perry, Brian & Stephanie Howard and family, Margarethe Van Zandt, Janean Wood, Brad & Michelle Cline and family, Judy Davis, Tom & Helen Veatch, Mary Johnson, Brent and Catherine Johnston and family, Karla Schumacher.

December Birthdays

1 Kyle Stanberry
2 Dennis Black
4 Kimberly Bahre
   David Deckard
8 Eleanor Hall
9 Dwight Corrin
10 Virginia Garver
11 Susan Bentson
12 Joan Aldrich
   Avi Rekoske
   Brandon Bowles
   Donovan McCall
13 Susan Brown
17 Frank Solomon
   Patrick Martin
18 Carol Wright
19 Janice Van Sickle
   Mary Jo McCormack
   Iris Weirick
20 Gary Huffman
23 Mary Knecht
25 Erica Grunder
26 Sarah Geering
   Cathy Marley
   Tom Warner, Jr
27 Jack Hollowell
28 Alexandra Washburn
   Don Setser
   Peggy Wathne
29 DJ Spaeth
30 Angelia Jones
Update on Kansas Leadership Transformation Application:
Amidst the disappointing news of our Transformation Grant being rejected, Kansas Leadership Center did grant our Core Team a mini grant so they could attend the *Your Leadership Edge* in 2020 without any cost to our church. The members on the Core Team, who have committed to guiding our church through transformation, are as follows: Cynthia Berner—Moderator, Stephanie Bird-Hutchison, Patrice Cummings, Jeff Van Sickle, Cynthia Rekoske, Melinda Sears, and Darryl Ott.

In addition, I had the privilege of having breakfast with the President/CEO of Kansas Leadership Center, Ed O’Malley, about what else KLC might be able to do to invest in our transformation. This breakfast meeting came about because I attended an all-day training event on October 29. As an alumnus of KLC, I was invited to take part in the discussions about making the *Journal* more reflective of the make-up of Kansas on issues that bridge rural and urban divide and on those who submit articles to the *Journal*. At a break-out session, I had a conversation with Ed which developed into an invitation over breakfast to discuss it further. Hopefully, something positive will come from my breakfast with Ed.

Also, I invite you to read my sermon on *Hope as Restoration and Resurrection* to understand better the transformation that needs to happen at First and how KLC can have a role in it. My sermon is on the information table or you can email me at pastor@firstchurchwichita.org and I will send you a digital copy.

Update on my Presbytery Commitments:
As some of you are aware of from previous Pastor’s Report, I am a member of Church Orders Ministry Team (COMT) which meets on the first Tuesday every month and has oversight on the ministers and churches within the geographic bounds of Southern Presbytery. Personally, I am a liaison to the following churches—Trinity Presbyterian Church, which just called their new minister, First Presbyterian Church in Derby, Westwood Presbyterian Church, Grace Presbyterian Church, and First Presbyterian Church in Hutchinson. Because First Presbyterian Church in Hutchison is without a pastor, I am moderate their Session on the 3rd Monday of the month. As you can imagine, this requires time and energy to do it well.

In addition, I am working with the Moderator of Presbytery of Southern Kansas, Rev. Laura Frazey, to form an Administrative Commission to charter Wichita Refugee Congregational Church (WRCC) as a new PCUSA church. I have met with Rev. Frazey to discuss the process in educating what being Presbyterian means to the leadership of WRCC. Towards this end, I have been doing leadership development with the WRCC every Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. We are studying the book of Acts. I am excited to learn that on Christmas Day, at the Camp, the WRCC is going to worship and celebrate Jesus’ birth by having me baptize babies, children, and adults. I have come to realize that they see me as their bishop or overseer. Or at least their pastor by default. It is my hope that when they get chartered as a new church, they will be eligible to receive assistance from our denomination to call a pastor.

Update on Matthew 25 Church Initiative:
At the September meeting of Session, we became a Matthew 25 Church, committing to congregational vitality, addressing issues of poverty and race. Towards that end, the Mission Commission will be showing the following film on December 4 at 6 p.m. in *The Well*—Webinar on “Healing the Wounds of White Privilege.” I hope you will be able to attend this informative session.

Getting in the Spirit of Advent:
The Mission Commission has order 50 Advent devotionals entitled *Straw for the Manger*. They are available on the informational table and in the Church Office. Please pick one up. They are free and a tangible way to say thank you for your commitment to the mission of First Presbyterian Church. Also, the devotional is a wonderful way to prepare for the birth of Christ with acts of kindness that adds straw to the Manger.

In addition, the Christian Education Commission will be showing Adam Hamilton’s *The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem* on December 11 and 18 in *The Well* from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

Lastly, we have special services for you the Sundays of Advent. On the first Sunday of Advent, we will have our joint service with the WRCC as well as celebrate Christmas with our children and youth choirs performing. After the service, we will have a potluck in the East Dining Room. On the third Sunday in Advent, we will have our Adult Choirs, (Choral and Handbell) performing a Cantata. On Christmas Eve, we will have our Pageant and Candlelight service that officially begins at 7 p.m. with an extended Prelude beginning at 6:30 p.m.

I do hope you will take part in these special services designed to get us in the Spirit of Advent.

Grace and Peace,
Share the Flowers!

Several folks have spoken to me about the possibility of sharing the cost of the Sunday flowers for the Sanctuary, and we have already done this on a couple of occasions. However, if more people are interested, I am very much in favor. The flower ministry is such an important part of our church service each week. It will mean more actual donors, but that can be a good thing.

If you are interested in participating with the shared flower donations, please let me know. I do ask that you contact me by email, msheff1@cox.net, leaving your name and phone number. As always, we will try to accommodate color and/or specific flower requests and dates, but we can discuss that when we talk. I hope to hear from you, and this will begin in the new year.

Marilyn Heffner
KEEP SABBATH HOLY

The Presbyterian Women’s Bible study group have been studying the 10 commandments and last month our focus was the fourth commandment, “
*Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work*” (Ex. 20:8-10). What exactly is Sabbath and why is this important? According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, Sabbath is defined “as a day of religious observance and abstinence from work, kept by Jews from Friday evening to Saturday evening, and by most Christians on Sunday”. Eugenia Gamble, a PC(USA) pastor and the author of our Bible study lesson ‘Love Carved in Stone’, says “Sabbath is a day of radical reorientation of life and priorities in which all people are equal and a day when we commit ourselves to relationship with God and the reorganization of life that this entails. This Word (Fourth Commandment) addresses the wound of busyness that substitutes for holiness, and achievement that substitutes for identity”. Sabbath becomes a “practice” of orienting life away from self-sufficiency and achievement and more towards a quiet rest in the provisions and power of God. Ms. Gamble says keeping Sabbath can be a form of gentle but powerful protest against the work ruling our lives. Sabbath awakens us to pause and calls us to find in those new spaces a chance to connect deeply with God throughout the day. In our study time, we discussed how to keep Sabbath a day for God and me and a day for God and us. A big part of Sabbath for us is our worship time each Sunday morning. We recognized the importance of worship, singing praises, hearing the Word, and praying together. Sabbath keeping brings a unique joy when having fellowship with like-minded people. Other ways to keep Sabbath holy include:

**Be at rest during the Sabbath.** Rest your mind, body and spirit. Spend time in nature and allow beauty to break through in the busyness of life.

**Bond with family and friends.** God intended for us to share the Sabbath with family and friends to build relationships.

**Bring joy and blessings to others.** Share your talents and gifts, write an encouraging note, call or visit a lonely person or a friend in need.

**Take moments to breathe deeply.** Quiet yourself and ponder God’s invitation to you to regularly stop for Sabbath rest, reorientation, and reconnection with Him. The Sabbath can lead us back to the creation week and remind us that God is our Creator and He, too, wants to develop a strong and intimate relationship with us.

**Be grateful and give thanks.** As we recognize blessings, we come to realize our humble dependence on God and others in our life. We are grateful for the ways God and others intervene on our behalf to enrich our lives. By practicing gratitude with simple acts of kindness certainly is keeping sabbath holy.

During this Advent Season, may you intentionally practice Sabbath time, especially reflecting on the magnificent birth of Baby Jesus. May you become mindful of ways to connect to Christ as well as ways to be Christ to others. Blessings to you and yours!

Joan
Children’s Ministry Activities in December

*December 1* The children will be singing and preforming a short reader’s play at the 10:45 a.m. worship service. We have asked that parents arrive with their children at 10 a.m. We will meet in the Sanctuary. The Nativity Processional will be on December 1, 2019 at the start of the 10:45 a.m. service. If you would like your child to participate in this long-time tradition, please meet us in the Narthex (back of the Sanctuary) at 10:30 a.m.

*December 11, 2019* is our last Wednesday Club meeting until January 8, 2020. We will be celebrating with a pizza party and Christmas movie.

*December 15, 2019* - We will be holding a parent meeting following the 10:45 a.m. service. We are working on Sunday programming for the children and would love your input.

*Nursery access* - If you are in need of nursery services for your child please contact Liz Norris @ 316-214-4318 or email Norris@firstchurchwichita.org so that I can make sure we are staffed. The nursery is for children 4 years of age and younger. We are here for you, so please do not hesitate to let us know if you need nursery accommodations.

We encourage you and your children to join you in Sunday morning worship. If your child is not able to sit in the service, we have an alternative worship space in *The Well* located directly across from the Sanctuary.

---

**Share in the delights** of the season with the FPC Playgroup. For the Christmas festivity in December, the children will do a holiday light tour with hot chocolate and sweets. Then, they will enjoy the warmth and celebration of the coming of the Christ Child for Epiphany in January. Join us for a marvelous journey of fellowship and fun the next five weeks! Siblings are welcome! Contact Michelle Murray-Cline for questions by calling (316) 794-1195.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December 6th</th>
<th>Holiday Light Tour Details TBA</th>
<th>Evening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 5th</td>
<td>Epiphany Celebration at First Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth Activities for December 2019

December 1 (Sunday) - 2 worship svc. 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. The 10:45 a.m. service will be a joint worship service with the WRCC (the youth are singing, please arrive by 10 a.m.) followed by a potluck lunch, followed by the youth group making college care packages.
*Nativity Processional (we need youth and children to be present at the beginning of the 2nd service)

December 3 (Tuesday) - CE Commission Meeting 5:30-7 p.m.

December 4 (Wednesday) - Youth Club – 5:30-8 p.m.

December 7 (Saturday) – Community Breakfast (Youth volunteering day) Arrive at 7:30 a.m.

December 8 (Sunday) - 2 worship svc. 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.

December 11 (Wednesday) - Youth Club – 5:30-8 p.m.

December 15 (Sunday) - *1 worship service @ 10:45 a.m.

December 22 (Sunday) - *1 worship service @ 10:45 a.m.

December 24 (Tuesday) - Drama and Candlelight Service 7:00 p.m.

December 25 (Wednesday) – Christmas Day!

December 30 (Sunday) - *1 worship service @ 10:45 a.m.

December 31 (Tuesday) – New Year’s Eve

Need to contact me?

Geri Doll-Youth Director-cell phone # 316-737-8855/doll@firstchurchwichita.org/Facebook.

We are happy to give you a ride, if needed.

November Young Adult Activity
Economy Corner News

The Economy Corner’s October total sales were $11,569.05. This is a decrease of $545.61 over October 2018 sales. We had to close for two days during the repaving of our parking lot. FPC’s share was $10,434.06 and Grace’s was $1,134.99. We filled 131 vouchers in October for basic clothing necessities which were equivalent to $2,013.45. FPC’s portion of the vouchers equaled $1,492.40 and Grace’s was $521.05.

This is the time of the year that reminds us that there are only two ways to live our lives. “One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is to live as though everything is a miracle.” -Albert Einstein.

We began our 6th annual New Coat give away a few days earlier than usual this year due to the frigid weather. We have provided coats for our Congolese congregation as well as other patrons.

Approximately half of our coat supply has been given out as of November 14th. One shopper asked what we do with donations. Thinking that this was in reference to “keep the change,” it was explained that we use that extra change to help out those who need a little more than they actually have to complete their purchase. Imagine the surprise when a $100 bill was laid on the counter by a “shopper angel”! It seems that we experience this kind of generosity every year during this time of Miracles.

We are blessed to witness and experience life as though everything is a miracle as well as be part of the efforts to assist our Urban Community. Thank you for your continued support and contributions.

Shhhh! Silent Auction Epiphany 2010

First Church is looking for folks who would like to submit a themed basket or items for a Silent Auction this January 5th. Proceeds of the auction will go to spiritual growth programming for all age groups, like adult retreats, renown guest speakers, camp tuition, and facility needs for children. This past year the Christian Education Commission utilized Bingo monies to start up a Playgroup for young families and monthly care cards for church members. Fill your “spiritual cup” and another’s by donating a basket of goodies to be auctioned off!

Contact Cynthia Rekoske for details or questions! 992-9595

Presbyterian Women review the Fifth “word of love”

The PW study circle is using the Horizon’s guide again this year with the theme “Love Carved in Stone—a fresh look at the Ten Commandments.”

Did you know that the word commandment is not used in the Bible. That’s why the study author is calling them “words of love.”

At the Wednesday, December 11 meeting, 10:00 a.m. in the Parlor, the subject is the fifth word of love: “Honor your father and mother so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

Joan Aldrich will lead the lesson. Please arrive by 9:30 a.m. for Christmas refreshments and special fellowship.

Please feel free to join us. All are welcome.
During 2020 First Presbyterian Church will be commemorating 150 years of organization. Throughout the year there will be special events to celebrate significant moments in the life of FPC.

Beginning in January, the Journeys class will consist of four sessions which recount the history of the church. The final session will be a live presentation telling the stories of the thirteen charter members. This class will meet in the Parlor at 9:30 on Sundays.

Since the original organizational meeting took place on March 13, 1870, we will gather at 12th and Jackson (one block west of Waco) at the site of the original dugout used by the congregation for worship in the winter of 1869-70. The actual meeting probably took place in another location, a few blocks south on Waco. History is a bit blurred as to the true location.

Sunday, March 15, 2020, will be the special worship service to commemorate our beginnings. A documentary is being prepared and will be premiered that day. You won’t want to miss it.

Throughout the remainder of the year, there will be activities of interest to all ages. The adjoining calendar gives the dates and events for the entire year. Some of these events will draw interest from the community and it would be a good time to invite friends to attend FPC.

In May, when we generally recognize the music department, there will be an alumni choir directed by Cecil Riney, former Director of Music. If you are a choir alumni, please pay attention for further information. If you know someone who used to sing in our choir, notify them and give their names to Steve Bixler or Marilyn Heffner.

The year will wind down with an old-fashioned oyster stew lunch in December. In 1870, the congregation gathered on Dec. 23 to raise money to finish the church building. It was an oyster stew supper and candy sale. They were trying to raise money for bricks to build a chimney. The church was being warmed by a stove with an exhaust pipe going out one of the windows.

You may not be able to participate in all of these events, but you will certainly want to be a part of the celebration. This will be a good time to let all of Wichita know who we are and where we are. In this instance the past provides us with a great thrust into the future.

150th Anniversary Celebration Year

Jan. 2020 – Journeys Class - Church History
Session 1 – Early Wichita, Dugout, Frame Church
Session 2 – Red Brick Church & Stone Church
Session 3 – 3 Men—3 Windows
Session 4 – 13 Charter Members

Feb. 2020 – Guided Tour of Church after worship - Lunch

March 13, 2020 – Commemoration of Church Organization at 12th & Jackson, 2:00 p.m.
Site of the Dugout

March 15, 2020 – Special Worship Service Premiere of Documentary on FPC

April 12, 2020 – Easter Celebration

April 19, 2020 – Angulo Mem. Concert, 3:00 p.m.

May 17, 2020 – Music Recognition Sunday
Alumni Choir with Guest Conductor

June 7, 2020 – Cowtown Church Worship
8:00 a.m. & 9:00 a.m. – Frame Church
10:45 a.m. – Worship in FPC Chapel

June 14, 2020 - Ice Cream Social/Antique Car Show

July 5, 2020 – Freedom Festival at Camp

August 9, 2020 – Youth Sunday

September 13, 2020 – Commemorate the Ded. of Red Brick Church Sept. 16, 1877

October 25, 2020 – Heritage Sunday

Nov. 3, 2020 – Recognition of 1st S.S. – Nov. 7, 1869
Ded. of Sanctuary Nov 3, 1912

Dec. 13, 2020 – Oyster Stew Lunch After 10:45 Worship
Commemorates 1st Christmas in Frame Church-Bricks for the Chimney
Recently, you may have noticed that the *Wichita Eagle* was advertising a book for sale featuring photographs of the early years of Wichita. The book has now been published and I received my copy last week. Earlier I had submitted several photos from the Archives collection and most of them were used in the book. The book is entitled *Wichita Memories: A Photographic History of the Early Years*. My copy will be donated to the Archives so you can drop by and browse through it sometime.

Another publication that features First Presbyterian Church is a catalog published by the Wichita Art Museum for an exhibition in 2021 featuring the works of Lloyd Foltz, a Prairie Print Maker. The book is entitled *Floyd C. Foltz: Etching & Aquatints, Lithographs and Block Prints*. I was contacted about a year ago because the Archives has one original print by Foltz and some other copies of prints that were used as church bulletin covers. The original drawing is of the church, including the Case Memorial Building, and was used as the center layout of the dedication program for the Case Building.

The third resource you may want to investigate is online at "visitwichita.com/150map." Since in 2020 the City of Wichita will be celebrating its 150th anniversary (as will First Presbyterian Church), a group of local historians have been meeting and have compiled a list of interesting historic places to visit around Wichita. This online map will show you the locations and give a brief description of each location. You could break this map up into several outings and enjoy seeing the places chosen by the committee.

The year 2020 will offer many opportunities to get to know the history of our church and city.

By Gary Huffman, Archivist
### Calendar

#### Sunday, December 1
- 8:30 Worship (Chapel)
- 9:00 Coffee Fellowship (The Well)
- 9:30 Journeys Class (Parlor)
- 10:00 Children's Service (Sanctuary)
- 10:15 Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)
- 10:45 Joint Worship w/ WRCC & Children/Youth Program (Sanctuary)
- 12:00 Potluck Dinner (EDR/WDR)
- 1:00 Youth Project (YL)

#### Monday, December 9
- 4:30 Personnel Mtg (Hobbs)

#### Tuesday, December 10
- 10:00 Pastoral Staff Mtg (Hobbs)
- 11:00 Staff Meeting (Hobbs)
- 5:30 Finance Mtg (Hobbs)

#### Wednesday, December 11
- 9:00 Dorcas Circle (C105)
- 10:00 PW Study Circle (Parlor)
- 5:30 Wednesday Clubs
- 6:15 James Ringers (Sanctuary)
- 6:30 Adult Ed Show-Adam Hamilton’s- "The Journey:Walking the Road to Bethlehem" (The Well)
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal (Choir Rm)

#### Thursday, December 12
- 9:00 Economy Corner Bd Mtg (EC)
- 5:00 Mission Comm. Mtg (Hobbs)

#### Friday, December 13
- 12:00 Lectionary Bible Study (C109)

#### Saturday, December 14
- 11:00 Brent's Bible Study w/WRCC (Hobbs)
- 11:45 Choir Luncheon (EDR)

#### Sunday, December 15
- Prayers of the People
- 9:00 Coffee Fellowship (The Well)
- 10:15 Blood Pressure Check (Parlor)
- 10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
- 10:45 Refugee Worship (C204)

#### Tuesday, December 17
- 10:00 Pastoral Staff Mtg (Hobbs)
- 11:00 Staff Mtg (Hobbs)

#### Wednesday, December 18
- 9:00 Dorcas Circle (C105)
- 6:15 James Ringers (Sanctuary)
- 6:30 Adult Ed Show-Adam Hamilton’s- "The Journey:Walking the Road to Bethlehem" (The Well)
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal (Choir Rm)
**DRIVERS NEEDED!!**

As you know, one of FPC’s missions is our Transportation Service. We provide transportation for those who are no longer able to drive. Members of our service are so grateful as there is no other service like ours.

At this time, we are in desperate need of regular drivers as well as substitute drivers. You will not be sorry and you will meet many interesting people in our community!

Please consider joining this mission. Contact Bruce Cole for more information. Call or text at 316-250-4577 or e-mail at bpvcole@gmail.com.

---

**Poinsettia Orders**

Poinsettia trees will once again adorn the Sanctuary for the Advent season. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in memory of or in honor of a loved one, the suggested donation is $12. Please place your order by December 12. Envelopes are located in the office or on the hall table located outside of the office.

---

**Newsletter Deadline**

The January Presby News Deadline is December 15, at NOON.

The editor reserves the right to edit submitted information for content and space availability.

Questions? Contact is 263-0248 or e-mail publications@firstchurchwichita.org.