

First Presbyterian Church
 PO Box 1550
 McAlester, OK 74502-1550

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN BOARDS:

Board of Deacons

Class of 2018 Elaine Green, Michelle Hayt, Marti Walrath,
 Margaret Griffith,
 Class of 2019 Peggy McConathy, Chris Testa, Patty Harrison,
 Anna Lou Myers
 Class of 2020 Richard Griffith, Paula Smart, Clint Jenkins

Moderator: Elaine Green/ Treasurer: Patty Harrison/
 Secretary: Michelle Hayt

Board of Elders, Session

Class of 2018 Keith Brewer, Janet Derichsweiler, Bill Dickson,
 Don Edgar, Weldon Ballenger
 Class of 2019 Tom Crowl, Mozelle Proctor, Steve Harrison,
 Alfred McConathy, Sally Judge
 Class of 2020 Donna Erickson, Sharon Lackey, Vickie Cherry,
 Bob Burden, Ron Boyer

Committee Chairs

CE Committee	Sally Judge
Property Committee	Tom Crowl
Mission	Janet Derichsweiler
Stewardship Committee	Steve Harrison
Worship	Ron Boyer
Membership & Outreach	Sharon Lackey

Clerk of Session: Jim Thompson
 Treasurer: Mozelle Proctor
 Council: Clerk of Session (Jim Thompson), Treasurer (Mozelle Proctor), Sally Judge, Tom Crowl, Janet Derichsweiler, Steve Harrison, Ron Boyer, Sharon Lackey

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. D. Scott Vandenhuevel, Pastor
 fpcmcpastor1@gmail.com

Ann Owens, Secretary
 fpcmcsecretary1@gmail.com

Terry Yates, Financial Secretary
 fpcmcfinance1@gmail.com

Debbie Young, Custodian

April Brown, Organist/Pianist

Paul Crowl, Director of Music Ministries

CONTACT INFORMATION

Located at: Third & Washington, McAlester, OK

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Phone: 918-423-2186 **Fax:** 918-423-3478

Website: www.fpcmcalester.com

Office Hours: M-F / 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

After hours, messages may be left on the voice mail and your call will be returned at the earliest opportunity.



December 2018

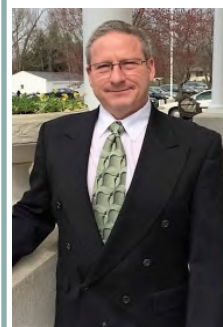


Ministering in our community since 1894
 A Monthly Publication of the
 First Presbyterian Church of McAlester, OK



Dear Friends in Christ:

May you and your loved ones take time to enjoy this wonderful time of the year and be in the Christmas spirit. I hope this note from me will get the mood started.



The Christmas story includes the awe-inspiring announcement of the birth of our Savior by an angel and company of heavenly hosts: "... I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." "(Luke 2:10-14 NIV)

We love to jump to that part of the story and so many Christmas songs include these joyful words. One song however includes the part about the audience – "... there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night." (Luke 1:8 NIV)

Scripture is unclear whether this event actually happened December 25th or some other day of the year. Until recently I have been undecided based upon the differing scholarly arguments I have read. Coming from the frozen tundra where it is assumed the whole world is snow covered at some point during the year, a white Christmas scene for Bethlehem made sense. But I have a different opinion now, based upon new considerations.

It's no secret that I love the weather in my new home state of Oklahoma; I'll take the heat any day over the cold and snowy "Winter Wonder Land" from where I came. (Incidentally, the key word in that phrase is "Wonder" because around January 1st, everyone up there is wondering what they are still doing there!) Maybe you can guess where I am going with this; well here is my argument for an April or September birthday for Jesus:

1. The biblical accounts of Luke and Matthew never mention a "white" Christmas theme anywhere.
2. The shepherds living out in the fields watching over their sheep were not praying "Lord, please don't let it snow, not even a dusting, oh no!" like I would have been doing. They didn't seem to be cold – in fact they were happy and willing to travel to Bethlehem.
3. There was no Santa magic back then to control the elements – that only started a century ago.
4. It most likely was not around July because if it's like here, someone I know thinks it is hot as ... , and Jesus would never have anything to do with that.

So there you have it - hope my argument made you smile. The truth is all that matters is that Jesus our Savior was born. So do a little HO HO HO – ing through this crazy busy season and live in the Peace & JOY. Thanks to Jesus we have great title for this month's sermons – Peace & Joy!

12/2/18	Psalm 25	1 Thessalonians 3:9-13	Sermon Title: "Because of You!"
12/9/18	CANTATA Sunday		
12/16/18	Isaiah 12:2-6	Philippians 4:4-7	Sermon Title: "Transcending"
12/23/18	Micah 5:2-5	Luke 1:39-55	Sermon Title: "Lord of Peace"
12/24/18	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service		
12/30/18	Pulpit Supply	Rev. Bill Westmoreland	

In closing, for all of you "dreaming of a white Christmas" – I am praying "HO HO HO – Lord please don't let it snow, snow, snow, not even a dusting oh no no no!"

Merry Christmas, Pastor Scott

THE Visitor

dates to Remember

- December 2** New Member Recognition Sunday
 - > Meet & Welcome at 9:30 am
 - > Presentation during worship
- December 2** Old Fashioned Christmas Carols 6P
Bring a snack & a friend!!
- December 8** Community Choir Christmas Concert
- December 9** Christmas Cantata
- December 15** New Elder & Deacon Training
- December 16** Elder & Deacon Ordination & Installation Sunday
- December 24** Christmas Candlelight Service 6 PM
- December 25** Christmas Day
- December 25 - January 1** Office closed for Christmas Holiday
- Visiting Ministers/Pulpit Supply:
- December 30** Bill Westmoreland



Gideon Defeats the Midianites
David Green was our guest Speaker on Gideon Sunday, November 11. He gave an inspiring message.

Thank you to all who gave a donation to this ministry. The total amount raised was \$888.00.

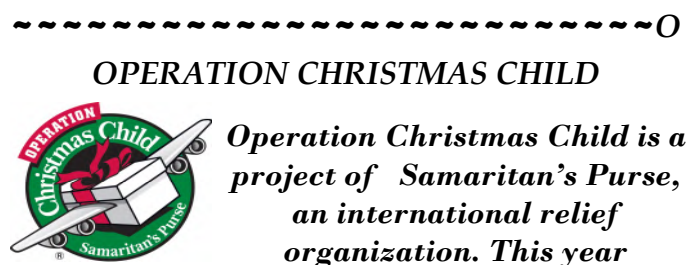
Poinsettias are on sale now. Cost is \$15. They will be a wonderful addition to the Christmas decorations in the sanctuary. **Deadline December 19.**



Sally Judge, the Mobile Foot Nurse, will offer non-cosmetic foot care at the church on the first Thursday of each month from 1:00 –5:00 PM.



She provides nail trimming, nail thinning, and callus reduction, for those who have difficulty maintaining their own foot care. This is a service especially needed by those who have poor eye-sight, arthritis, thick nails or diabetes. The foot care service is offered free of charge for church members and their family. Call Sally at 918-424-8555 for more information and appointment scheduling.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD
Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international relief organization. This year members of the church filled 17 boxes. Thank you to all who participated.

Sarah Circle
Christmas party will be held at June Boyd's home on Thursday, December 6 at 6:30 PM.



ALL women are invited to join in the fun! Hope you'll come and invite a friend! Bring your favorite snack.

The Deacons will be taking donations of non-perishable food items through Monday, December 17. They will provide 10 baskets of food to some of the less fortunate in our area. They are asking members of the congregation to provide 10 like items; such as 10 cans of corn, 10 boxes or bags of noodles, 10 one pound bags of flour. Con-



Session Notes from November 2018

Deacons: Deacons are collecting non-perishable items for 10 Christmas Food Baskets. They are planning to discontinue the Soup Kitchen Project at the end of 2018.

Retirement: First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa will host a retirement celebration for Rev. Dr. Greg Coulter, our Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery Executive, on December 3, 2018. See the bulletin board in Westminster Hall for more information.

Coming Events!

Visiting Minister/Pulpit Supply:

Rev. Bill Westmoreland on Sunday, November 25, 2018
Rev. Bill Westmoreland on Sunday, December 30, 2018

New Member Recognition Sunday: December 2, 2018. Welcome them at a reception at 9:30 AM in Westminster Hall. Session has approved receiving the following new members upon their public affirmation of faith:

Aaron J. Yates Brittani Slotta Robin Anne Brown

Raymond Claud Brown II Julie Fleeman Susan Holub Doug Holub

Christmas Carols Sing-Along: December 2, 2018 at 6:00 PM. Westminster Hall. Everyone brings favorite snack.

Cantata: December 9, 2018. During the Worship service. "Night of the Father's Love"

Advent Celebration: Thursday, December 13, 10:00 AM, in the Edwards Chapel. April Perry Brown will be the guest speaker. Share the fun as you learn about "Seven Surprisingly Simple Ways to Find JOY in the Holidays." Refreshments served at 9:30 AM in Parlor.

Elder & Deacon Ordination & Installation Sunday: December 16, 2018.

During our **Congregational Meeting on November 18, 2018** the Deacons and Elders for the Class of 2021 and 2019 Nominating Committee Members-at-Large were elected.

Deacons: Archie Miller, Joyce Ballenger, Mary Ann Kerl, Diane Rula, Pam Zugelder, Rick Cherry

Elders: Elaine Green, Paul Crawl, Dr. Kenneth Miller, Jan Grubbs, Annie Miller

Nominating Members-at-Large: Dot Thompson, Ed Harrington, Deborah Hackler, Bill Dickson

Christian Education: The committee is planning a congregational Advent daily devotional by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. More information coming soon.

Property & Grounds Management: The committee is working on projects to repair our windows. They have many other projects underway with many opportunities for volunteering for particular tasks.

Budget Summary: Our October Budget Summary is posted on the bulletin board in Westminster Hall. Session approved the 2019 Budget during their meeting on November 13.

Next Session Meeting: The next Session meeting will be Tuesday, December 11, 2018.