



FPC Ocala

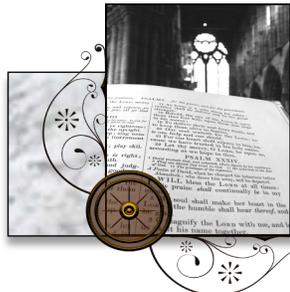
THE SPIRE

December 2019

Member of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Volume 62 Number 12

Our Vision - Our Mission
To spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to our community and the world.
To be an inclusive downtown community of faith that seeks to embrace everyone in growing spirituality.



THE REV. DR. D. RONALD WATSON, JR.
PASTOR

For Unto Us a Child is Born

I'll never forget the Christmas I spent in the Holy Land-Armenian Christmas! In the Holy Land, the Orthodox churches use the old calendar (which has a difference of twelve days) to determine the date of the religious feasts. Accordingly, the Armenians celebrate Christmas on January 18th and the Greek Orthodox celebrate on January 6th. Staying just outside the city walls in Jerusalem, we walked each morning into the ancient city through the Armenian section and Christmas decorations. Our trip into Bethlehem saw amazing Christmas trees and decorations left up for the Armenians (and the cynic in me said, to sell more Christmas ornaments). But leaning over in humility to enter the tiny door of the oldest church in Christendom, and then crouching down into the grotto to the place where Jesus was born, I was reminded again just how amazing and humble the birth of Jesus was and in many ways, still is. We take that and make impossible expectations on ourselves and others. Why? We do this because the incarnation of God was the biggest event in history when it happened. God came down. And we celebrate, even though our feelings will take us to both unexpected heights and depths.

No amount of preparation will change this Christmas season from what it is going to be. It will have highs and lows. I must...we must....remember that, "unto

us, a child is born." And that miracle is what the season is about: all the hope, peace, joy, and love that the Christ child brings.

I want you to know how we will celebrate here in church:

- December 1 Advent I-three Sunday services
December 8 Advent II- Christmas Cantata one service: 11 a.m.
December 11 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall- Christmas Dinner
December 15 Advent III- three Sunday services
December 22 Advent IV-three Sunday services
December 24 5:00 pm Contemporary Worship in Fellowship Hall
7:00 p.m. Traditional Worship in Sanctuary with Communion
December 29 First Sunday of Christmas— one service: 11 a.m.

Whether you will be in Ocala for Christmas or off visiting family or friends, I hope this Advent Season brings the Christ child into your heart.

Christmas Peace,
Ron



Peggy Wiechmann, Clerk of Session

SESSION BRIEF – NOVEMBER 3, 2019

Mourned the death of Dr. Bobby Richardson on 10/10/2019.

Accepted Doug and Patty Holcomb into membership.

Approved the Elder Class of 2022 to be a class of seven elders including 1 youth elder.

Approved each committee chairperson to do a three-minute presentation to all three worship service, showcasing what the committee does and how it impacts the church.

Approved the Personnel Committee to recommend a temporary replacement for Hannah Batten as the Children's Director. Hannah will be leaving at the end of January. Also, the Personnel Committee will research the position of a Stated Supply Associate Pastor position.

Thank you for your pledges. So far we have received \$474, 901 representing 108 families. In 2019, total pledges were \$638,364 from 163 families. Keep those pledges coming in!

Thank You's to FPC

♦ **A great BIG thank you** to those of you who signed Christmas cards for our US Armed Service members! We mailed approximately 100 cards to the Red Cross to be distributed during December :) John Brawner shared with me the disappointment of receiving NO MAIL from home during some of his mail calls while he was serving. In a time that technology has become a standard of communicating... John reminded us of the importance of a handwritten note! Your cards will arrive at mail call to those overseas, and decorate a hospital tray of an injured service member. Just think: YOU may gift someone who needs a lift—who is sacrificing all they can give for YOU! Please keep those serving our country in your prayers! * Cathy Edwards - Giving Tree Committee *

♦ **Marion Senior Services recognizes FPC's Meals on Wheels efforts!** The following note of appreciation appears in the November issue of Marion Senior Services newsletter: **HIGHLIGHT! Meals on Wheels** Thank you, First Presbyterian Church for your years of dedicated partnership with Marion Senior Services. Over the past year the Meals on Wheels driver group has run 4,671 miles and logged over 566 hours of service. Your dedication to our seniors does not go unnoticed!

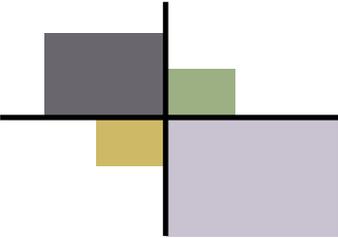
♦ **Thank you for your support of the Mission Fair/ SERRV Sale!** We raised over \$2,000 for SERV. ALL the money raised goes directly back to the artisans involved. The community agencies you also so generously support throughout the year enjoyed the Mission Fair and getting to meet FPC members. Thank you so much to Vikki Hutto who supplied the wonderful punch, and Presbyterian Women & Christian Outreach committee for the delicious goodies. Also grateful thanks to Lee Anne Drake and her helpers Fran Akin and Jules Watson for their participation in the SERRV Sale. THANK YOU ALL for stopping by the Mission Fair / SERRV Sale!

♦ **Want to thank everyone** at church for the beautiful flowers I received, the cards and the visits during my recent illness. All meant a great deal to me. Thank you so much, Ellen Matthews

Attendance				
Worship services	11/3	11/10	11/17	11/24
8:15 a.m.	35	42	44	41
9:30 a.m.	48	59	56	58
11:00 a.m.	100	91	98	112
Total	183	195	191	211

Mission Trip to Puerto Rico with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

FPC is in the planning stages of a mission trip to Puerto Rico from (tentatively) May 26-June 3, 2020. If you are interested in taking this journey, email the pastor (drwatson@fpcocala.org) or call the church office (352)629-7561.



Hannah Batten Youth and Children Ministries

Youth Mission Opportunity On Saturday, December 7, Kaleo youth will travel to Camp Montgomery to assist with some much-needed cleanup around the camp. If you are available and would like to earn service hours—or just like helping out, please sign up! We will leave from the church at 8:00 a.m., work until 12:30 p.m., eat lunch at camp and then return to FPC. Please contact Hannah Batten (hbatten@fpcocala.org).



Youth & Children's Disney Christmas Trip

Christmas is fast approaching and to celebrate we're going to Disney World! We invite any and all children—(those under 12 must be accompanied by a parent)—and youth to join us on this fun day trip. We will leave from the church at 7:00 a.m. on Monday, December 23 and return that evening. The ticket prices are \$134 for ages 3-9 and \$139 for those 10 and over. To register, or if you have questions or need financial assistance, please contact Hannah Batten (hbatten@fpcocala.org).



Good News

On Sunday, Nov. 17, the First Presbyterian Church of Perry, Florida, welcomed its new pastor, the Rev. Natasha Sudderth-Davis, to the pulpit during the 11 a.m. worship service. We rejoice with Natasha on her new call, and we give her, Ed, Noah, and Belicia, our prayers and best wishes.



Featured Acolyte of the Month

Skye Caskey,
daughter of Scott and Denise Caskey

3 special things Skye likes to do:
Going to Disney with her family, playing Baseball with her brother and collecting Lego Disney Castles.

Skye wanted to be an Acolyte because:
she wanted to be involved in her church.



Skye Caskey

Presbyterian Women, Pat Greaves, Moderator

To ALL the women of First Presbyterian Church of Ocala

Thanks to all who support the mission programs of Presbyterian Women. In 2019 PW celebrated its 31st Anniversary through ministry as well as financial gifts to ensure that PW will continue to make God's world a place of hospitality and abundance for God's people for another 31 years and beyond.



On Tuesday, December 10th, we will hold our **COMBINED CHRISTMAS LUNCH** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Tom Weaver will bring Lesson Four, "Words of Love: Honor the Life-Givers," in the Horizon's Bible Study book, *Love Carved in Stone*. by Eugenia Anne Gamble. Following the lesson we will enjoy a catered lunch from Café Crisp, which will include Chicken salad, fruit, croissant and assorted Christmas cookies. The cost of the lunch is \$6.00, payable at the door.

Newcomers are always welcome to our Circle meetings or the Christmas lunch. If you're interested in joining a Circle, please feel free to contact Pat Greaves, Moderator, at 362-0013. Come and join in Christian fellowship. Many thanks for Tom Weaver who spends countless hours preparing the handouts that go with each lesson. He holds the mentoring sessions each month. THANKS, TOM!

Thirty-three ladies attended the **PW FALL GATHERING** held on Saturday, November 9th, 2019. The 2019 Thank Offering of Presbyterian Women was dedicated. Eliza Clokey of Springfield, OH, planted the seed for Presbyterian Women's Thank Offering in 1888 when she urged each woman to give one dollar over and above her usual contribution to the Women's General Missionary Society of the United Presbyterian Church of North America. Year after year, women have responded to Clokey's call to give a "thank offering to her Lord," and have raised tens of millions of dollars for missions at home and around the world.

"Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.

When you search for me you will find me if you seek me with all your heart."....Jeremiah 29:12-13.



Debbie Koch received the PW HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD during the Fall Gathering. Honorary Life Memberships are rooted in a tradition that began in 1912 and continue today in the coming together of Presbyterian Women from the former United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.) Debbie has served as the Bereavement Program Coordinator of FPC's Presbyterian Women since 2013. She has given of herself unselfishly helping to coordinate memorial receptions for members of our congregation. What a gift God has given her with a heart to help those in a time of deep loss. Debbie attends the 8:15 worship service in which she is an usher and greeter, and helps with Communion preparation. She has served on the Security Committee since its inception and has filled many other volunteer duties in our Church. Ella Charnley, the 2018 Honorary Life Membership recipient, and Pat Greaves, Moderator made the presentation. Congratulations, Debbie for a job well done!!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF ST. AUGUSTINE....its Annual Gathering will be held on Saturday, January 25, 2020 at the Montgomery Conference Center. The cost is \$20.

PRAYER SHAWL...a thank-you from The Seamen's Church Institute.

Dear Members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry, our heartfelt appreciation of your generous donations in support of Christmas at Sea. It is obvious each piece was made with love. The mariners who receive your gifts will know behind each garment is an individual who cares. Your support means the world to us and the mariners we serve. We deeply value our faith-based communities and feel blessed to have your support. With gratitude....Joanne

We welcome all knitters and crocheters of any level to join us the fourth Thursday of each month. We meet in the Conference room at 1:30. We will NOT meet in December. Contact: Liz Diener-Dickmann, 908-377-8913

Save the Date!

January 15
at
7:00 p.m.



The King's Brass Concert

Christmas Cantata 2019

Have You Heard?

A Celtic Christmas Celebration
with the Chancel Choir and FPC String Ensemble
Come and Hear the Joyous Celebration
of Our Savior's Birth

Sunday, December 8, 2019 11:00 a.m.

Fellowship

Christmas Dinner

Join us for fellowship and always delicious food! Our Christmas WOW Dinner and carol singing will be held

Wednesday, December 11, 2019



Art Connection

*An opportunity for fellowship through art for all ages
no experience is necessary & supplies are provided*

Wednesday, December 4, 4-6 p.m.

Fellowship Hall dinner to follow!

We'll be creating earrings for cancer patients.



Fellowship on the Go

Saturday, December 7th Bring your family and friends to visit the Appleton Museum. It will be the only free day to visit the current Impressionism exhibit, see the community Christmas trees, and enjoy the "Dickens Christmas: Urban Family Holiday Exhibition". Make some art with Mary Moore in the ARTSpace 10 to noon.

No other meetings or dinners are scheduled in December.

Happy Birthday

December Birthdays

1	7	14	20	27
Ernie Griggs	Wendie Moore	Bill Rainbow	Melissa Gillum	Alice Cannon
2	8	Bob Timmer	21	Dolores Dyer
Christina Diuguid	Michael McCurry	Peyton Yancey	Kristi Gillum	Gary Merians
3	10	16	Leslie Switzer	Caity Peterson
Marion Thomas	Tammy Langley	Stacey Batten	22	28
7	Vicki Stephens	18	Will Futch	Tom Michael
Anne Wilton	Evelyn Weaver	Paula Brown	Christina Gankiewicz	29
5	11	Teresa Lewis	23	Colleen Anderson
Van Akin	Nancy Dozier	Paul Militello	Cindy Andrews	John Cooley
6	12	Eleanor Willis	25	30
Nancy Graham	Shirley Cochran	19	Maggie Moore	Randy Freise
Carol Smith	Kyle Rodgers	Frank Fraunfelter	26	31
		Jennifer Fraunfelter	Ann McCoy	John Bennett
			Renee Timmer	



First Presbyterian Church Ocala gives thanks for the lives of Lisa Dobbs, daughter of Ron and Mary McMillin, who joined the saints of light on November 2, 2019, and Jeannette Bryant who joined the saints of light on November 22, 2019.

With believers of every time and every place, we rejoice that nothing in life or death can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYER LIST

Randall & Linda Deyton (Pickard family prayer concerns)
Mary Dingman (death of her mother)
Kathy and Terry Donovan (Nita Williams' friends)
Stewart Edwards
Hank Fleming (Hawthorne Village Rehab)
Maranell Fleming
Fran Gilchrist
Barbara Gowie
Dick Hancock
Bettie Haupt (illness and death of her husband, Paul)
Adelia Hupp (death of Charles Cheadle)
Kathy Lance (Lois Lance's daughter-in-law)
Lois Lance
Grietje Lewis
Celine Mack

Ron and Mary McMillin (death of their Daughter, Lisa Dobbs)
Earl McNeel (Pat Greaves' brother)
Ray Newhouse (Pat Bishop's brother)
Raul Nieves (Mina DiGeronimo's brother)
John Reynolds (Suzy Heinbockel's brother)
Greg Robinson (Carolyn Varner's brother)
Michael Rou (Dr. David Albright's cousin)
Janice Schafer (Palm Garden)
Delores Shotwell
Steve and Keith Shotwell
Jill Hester Whitaker
Bo and Sally Williams
Eleanor Willis (Brentwood at Fore Ranch)
Diane Wirono

Please also remember in prayer all the people who have no one to pray for them.

Interfaith Supper Sign-Up for 2020!

Thank you all who participated in 2019 from individual families to Sunday School Classes, Bible Study Groups, PW Circles, Friends, and Deacons. We have many openings available for 2020! FPC always provides a dinner on the 2nd Thursday of each month. If you or your group are interested, please call or text Jarl Hagood at 352-867-9372 or jarlhagood@aol.com. Thank you for sharing your blessings and being a blessing!

Outreach Ministries

2019 Christmas Giving Tree!

FPC's Annual Christmas Giving Tree Project kicked off on Nov. 24! The committee has been working hard since Sept. 18 on making this the most successful giving season yet! The beautiful ornaments are yours to keep and were made by Vicky Roberts and at the Art Connection on Wednesday nights. This year the committee screened and chose the following benevolences to gift: Project Hope, Domestic Violence Center, Hands of Mercy (helps teen mothers and their babies) and Sozo Kids (helps children living in poverty in Ocala National Forest area).

The deadline for turning in gifts is December 9.

As always, there are two Christmas trees, one in Fellowship Hall and one in the Narthex, full of beautiful ornaments. As always, you keep the ornament(s) and fulfill the gift request on each ornament. Please take as many as you wish.



Each gift item should be UNWRAPPED and each check made out to First Presbyterian Church earmarked "2019 Giving Tree".



Thank you! We look forward to working together to help make this year's Giving Tree the most successful yet! Please let us know if you have any questions: Sue Brawner, Carol Carpenter, Margaret Baker, Cheryl Fante, Cathy Edwards, Lannie Mercer, Becky Schatt, Ann VanDenburgh, Jarl Hagood, Katie White, Vicky Roberts.

Camp Montgomery's Director, Lexi Green, has Much to Share about this Special Camp that has SO Much to Offer!

Montgomery's had a crazy and wonderful fall season so far! Among its many guest groups, they've also hosted two weekend retreats—its **Silent Retreat** and the **Rise Youth Retreat**, with a combined participation of over 120. Nine churches attended the Rise Retreat—a new record!

Fuel Men's Retreat—December 6-8—is just around the corner! You're invited! David Keck, from Embry Riddle University, is the featured speaker. There will be intentional worship and fellowship, plus time to explore the beautiful Montgomery Camp and Conference Center. So grab some friends and register online today to ensure your spots! The registration is \$120 per person for the weekend. If you have questions about how to register—a single or a group—contact Lexi Green at lexi@montgomerycenter.org.

Site Updates – Montgomery's preparing to update its Dining Hall and office areas. Beginning in 2020, they'll search for volunteer assistance in making Montgomery's vision come alive. If you're curious how you might help, contact Lexi Green at her email address above, or call her at (704) 883-4821.

Giving Tuesday - The camp invites you to be part of this global movement that seeks to "encourage people to do good." Giving Tuesday began in 2012 as this simple idea and has now blossomed into a global phenomenon that inspires millions to give back, collaborate, and celebrate generosity. We ask that you would prayerfully consider being part of this movement and supporting Montgomery by contributing to continuing the mission of Montgomery.

From Lexi Green, the Director: *Montgomery is excited to continue its mission of welcoming all to experience Christ and creation. Thank you for your prayerful consideration to be part of Montgomery's mission.*

—Grace and Peace, Lexi



First Presbyterian Church
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Sent with a prayer to:

Christmas Calendar

<i>December 1</i>	<i>8:15, 9:30, 11:00 a.m.</i>
<i>December 8</i>	<i>Christmas Cantata 11 a.m. only</i>
<i>December 11</i>	<i>Christmas Dinner 6 p.m.</i>
<i>December 15</i>	<i>8:15, 9:30, 11 a.m.</i>
<i>December 22</i>	<i>8:15, 9:30, 11 a.m.</i>
<i>December 24</i>	<i>Both Candlelight 5:00 p.m. Family Fellowship Hall 7:00 p.m. Traditional Communion</i>
<i>December 29</i>	<i>11:00 a.m. one service only</i>



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