December 2014

First Presbyterian Church, 300 Burleson, Smithville, TX

Newsletter

Sunday Schedule

Choir Practice – 9:30 am
Sunday School – All Ages 10 am
Fellowship in Library 9:45-10:45 am
Coffee and refreshments served
Worship Service - 11 am

And the Light in the darkness shines, and the darkness cannot put it out.
John 1:5

If I had to pick a favorite part of Christmas Eve worship, it would be that time in complete darkness when a single candle is lit. It usually flickers for a moment before it glows steadily. Then, as each one leans toward the person sitting next to him or her, the light is carefully passed from one to another. It doesn't take long before the sanctuary is bathed in the gentle, golden light.

Surely, this must be one of the most powerful representations of the Christian community. Even one tiny light can penetrate the deep darkness; help us see where we are and who our neighbors are. But it is as the light gets shared, and all the single, tiny lights blend together that we are able to see further and more clearly. So it is with sharing the good news of the Baby born in Bethlehem so many years ago.

But there is more. In the darkness, there are things we really do not want to see. As the light grows, as we can see more clearly, some of what we see will be ugly. It will repel us. The light that illuminates the love and joy in others' faces will also reveal the unloved and the sorrowing. The light that shines on beautiful decorations and bountiful tables will also uncover poverty and hunger. While we rejoice in the Light of God's Love, we must prepare ourselves to take that Light and that Love into the darkest and most wretched of places, even as Jesus did. Our separate lights may be dim, but brought together, God can use them to bring the light of peace and healing and hope. This Advent let us pray that God will use His Light in us to bless others.

David and I wish each one of you all the joys and blessings in this most holy of times.

Jane

Church Leadership

Pastor – Rev. Jane C. Johnson - 512.608.4293 Email - caperton6@austin.rr.com
Clerk of Session - Nancy Martin 512.661.8626
Pastoral Assistant - Susan Guedry 512.360.4930
Music Director – Lisa Maresh 512.308.7319
Worship Committee – Chairman Susan Guedry 512.360.4930
Mission & Outreach Committee – Chairman Janet Stephens 512.237.3814
Building & Grounds /Fellowship & Nurture Committees - Board of Deacons
Session Members - Susan Guedry, Jane Istre, Nancy Martin, Lori Lancaster, Jim McLaughlin, David Herrington, Janet Stephens

Board of Deacons – Dot Dillon, Moderator; Gloria Hurta, Hoyt Johnson, Kathy Ford, Kelly Hubley, Pat McLaughlin

Custodian – Anna Hernandez 512.237.3880

Web Site – www.fpcsmithville.org – Kathy Ford 512.321.4132

From a friend of Pastor Jane's: *"I came across this while I was proofreading the religion page at WCN today. The source is anonymous. Found on yellowed paper in papers of elderly lady who passed. Thought you'd like it, too."*

"Go give to the needy sweet charity's bread.

For giving is living," the angel said.

"And must I be giving again and again?"

My peevish petulant answer ran.

"Oh no," said the angel, piercing me through.

"Just give till the Master stops giving to you."

And from a friend on Facebook:

"I want to ask God why he doesn't stop the killing and end the poverty,

But, I'm afraid he'll ask me the same question."

Birthdays for December were inadvertently left out of the 2014 Church Directory:

12/05 Phillips, Rick
12/10 Lancaster, Lori
12/10 Walters, Miki
12/11 Webb, Carolyn
12/11 Gosselink III, Jake
12/15 Ford, Alan
12/18 Ceder, Lacy (V)
12/19 Bell, Jordan
12/20 Michell, Bernard
12/29 Saunders, Blakelee
12/31 Ford, Kathryn

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS – *Nancy Martin*

First Presbyterian Church Session met on November 23, 2014 for their monthly Stated Session Meeting.

Pastor Jane reported she will be out the Sunday after Christmas, December 28, 2014. Alan Ford , Pastor Jane, Paul Pape, Janice Butler, Shirley Sheffield met again to develop plans for giving emotional and spiritual support for the fire survivors with funds that BCLTRT still has available.
Pastor Jane visited with our COM representative Phil Barnes about the health of our Church Congregation.

At the request of Kathy Ford from the Deacons, Session looked into setting up an account with Amazon for donations received from orders placed with Amazon. For security reason Treasurer Jane Istre checked with the Bank on the process and costs of setting up such an account and because of the incurred fees Session voted not to move forward with this suggestion. The Deacons requested a $40 donation from the Church for a gift basket to donate to Towers Nursing Homes Game Night. Proceeds go for Christmas Gifts for residents who have no family.

The date for Elder and Deacon Training has been set for January 17, 2015 from 9-2 at the Church. The newly elected Elders and Deacons will be Ordained and Installed on January 25th.

The next meeting is the Dinner Meeting with Elders and Deacons on December 14, 2014 T 5 pm at the home of Nancy and Bob Martin in Cedar Creek.

Smithville Food Pantry November Report
From *Dorothy Dillon*

November

Date	Clients	Family Members	New Clients	Family Members
11/5	192	247	3	9
11/12	117	260	4	6
11/19	117	320	4	7
11/25	158	387	1	4
Totals	584	1014	12	26

Please bring your donations on First Sunday and place them in the basket at the covered dish luncheon. There will also be envelopes available if you prefer to give money. The Food Pantry can purchase food from the Capital Area Food Bank much more economically than you can purchase it at the store, so please consider giving by check/cash. If you have questions, please contact Dorothy Dillon.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

From Gwen Morris

Women's Bible Study meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month, September through May. Our next meeting is on Wed., Dec. 10 at 5:30 p.m. Our study for 2014-2915 is entitled "Reconciling Paul – a Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians" by Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty. Our meal will be a covered dish supper – bring your favorite dish! Join us then for study, fellowship and a light supper in the Fellowship Hall, downstairs. Everyone is welcome!

Report on the Community Thanksgiving Service

On Sunday, November 23, our church hosted the Community Thanksgiving Service.

We had a large turn-out and many compliments on the church and the Service, including the choir; and the reception. Thanks to everyone who helped!

Church Attendance -Nov.2014

Prepared by Dorothy Dillon

Date	Members	Regular Visitors	Visitors	Total
11/2	35	5	0	40
11/9	27	5	1	33
11/16	31	4	0	35
11/23	29	3	0	32
11/30	21	3	0	24

December Communion Schedule

Jane Istre, Jim McLaughlin, Lori Lancaster, Pat McLaughlin

The first person listed will bring the bread, prepare the communion table, pick up the glasses at the end of the service, wash and put away the service trays. (Please do not cut the bread on the silver plate.)

If you cannot be at church when it is your turn to be in charge of the preparation for communion, please call the Elder listed after you to prepare the communion in your place and ask one of the other Elders to serve in your place. Those who serve communion also collect the offering and should ask for a back-up before the service if you will not be able to collect the offering. Backup Elders: Nancy Evans, Gwen Morris, LaVerne Herrington, Alan Ford, John Saunders, Sammye Hodges, and Susan Guedry.

Mission Outreach - *Janet Stephens*

Our **Joy Offering** goal is $350. Boxes have been distributed for the offering, but if you didn't get one, more are available. The offering will be collected on Sunday, Dec. 21st.

We have been assigned a family to provide Christmas presents for their children through **Project Angel Tree**. We have collected $45. The presents will be given to them by a parent who is in prison.

We continue to work the **Born Again Emporium** store. Our next week is Jan. 19 through Jan. 24th. Hours are 9:00 to 2:00 on workdays, but on sale days, the hours are 10:00 to 2:00. A huge thank you goes to all the people who help in this important endeavor.

The **Jump Start** after school program is going very smoothly. In December we will meet the first 3 weeks of the month to study finances.

A **very special thank you** to our congregation!!!! You are truly in tune with God's work.

Upcoming Events and News for December AND January

Adult Sunday School – We will continue our Advent Series, "A Thrill of Hope, The Christmas Story in Word and Art".

Poinsettias Sale – The sale has ended and the poinsettias will be used to decorate the church until after the Christmas Eve Service when purchasers will take them home to enjoy.

Jump Start for Girls: Meets each Wednesday from 4-6 pm. in our fellowship hall. **In December, we will meet only the first 3 weeks of the month** to learn about finance issues**.** Your help is always welcomed in this endeavor. Please talk to Jane Istre for more information.

Workday at Church – Decorate for Advent/Christmas - 9 am, Sat., Dec. 6

First Sunday in December – Sun., Dec. 7 - Communion and Covered Dish Meal and Congregational Meeting to elect Elders/Deacons for Class of 2017. Donations for the Food Pantry collected.

Women's Bible Study - 5:30 pm, Wed., Dec. 10

Combined Elder/Deacon Dinner – 5:30 pm, Sun., Dec. 14

Joy Offering Collected - Sun., Dec. 21

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service - Wed., Dec 24 at 6 p.m.

Born Again Emporium – Mon., Jan. 19 to Sat., Jan. 24 – our Church's week to work. ***Come by anytime during this week to help with donations, pricing, and sales!! If you cannot come this week, come anytime and help other churches.***

Elder/Deacon Training Session – Sat., Jan. 17 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Church

Installation of Elders/Deacons – Sun., Jan. 25th

December 2014

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 *World Aids Day* *Presbyterian HIV/AIDS Awareness*	2	3 Jump Start for Girls 4-6 pm	*4*	*5*	**6**
7 **2nd Sunday of Advent** *Service 11 am* *Communion* *Covered Dish Lunch,* ***Congregational Meeting-Elect Elders/Deacons***	8	9	10 **Janis & Bill Riebe** **Lori Lancaster** **Miki Walters** *Human Rights Day* Jump Start for Girls 4-6 pm	11 **Jake Gosselink III** **Carolyn Webb**	*12*	13 **Dianna & John Saunders**
14 **3rd Sunday of Advent** *Service 11 am* *Elder Deacon Dinner 5:30 pm*	15 **Alan Ford**	16	17 *Women's Bible Study - 5:30 p.m.* Jump Start for Girls 4-6 pm	18 **Lacey Ceder**	19 **Jordon Bell**	20 **Bernard Michell**
21 **4th Sunday of Advent** *Christmas Joy Offering* *Service 11 am*	22	23	24 **Christmas Eve** **Candlelight Service 6:00**	25 **Nativity of Jesus Christ - Christmas Day** 	26	27
28 **1st Sunday after Christmas Day** *Service 11 am* *Communion*	29 **Blakelee Saunders**	**30**	31 **Kathy Ford**			