



# First Presbyterian Church OF OKLAHOMA CITY

Newsletter

December 2020

## Advent Devotionals

### Let us light candles!

This year I hope you will join me in using Presbyterians Today's Advent and Christmas devotional, "Let Us Light Candles: Matthew 25 and the work of Advent." This extended online devotional will take us through Epiphany, January 6. It brings to you the inspiring words of Howard Thurman, a hero of mine, in his poem "I Will Light Candles This Christmas." Printed copies of the devotional will be available from the church office in addition to the online option ([pcusa.org/2020advent](https://pcusa.org/2020advent)).

As part of our celebration of the season, I invite you to take pictures of lit candles in your home. Text or email them to me ([pastorjohn@fpcokc.org](mailto:pastorjohn@fpcokc.org) or 405-420-6383). We will add them to our worship space as we light candles this Christmas in celebration of the light that conquers all darkness. This year more than ever we need to celebrate the Advent of Christ.

From the devotional introduction: "Thurman, a Baptist pastor, theologian and civil rights activist, was born in 1899. The grandson of a former slave, Thurman was named by Life magazine in 1953 as one of the 12 greatest preachers in the country. The pastor not only co-founded San Francisco's Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in 1944 — the first interfaith and intercultural congregation in the United States — but he also mentored a young Martin Luther King Jr., who received his Ph.D. in 1955 at Boston University, **CONTINUED...**

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKLAHOMA CITY**

where Thurman was serving as the first Black dean of Marsh Chapel.

Thurman's most well-known book, "Jesus and the Disinherited," published in 1949, illustrates the pastor's theology. In it he expounds on Jesus' example of unconditional love and illustrates how that love not only helps the disinherited endure oppression, it also changes the heart of oppressors.

Nowhere better can Thurman's belief in such a redemptive, transformative love be seen than in his writings about the light that came into the world at Christmastime.

Our world has been shrouded in the darkness of racial and political unrest, and the cloud of pandemic uncertainties is still hovering low. But there is a light coming to us, one promised by God. It is a light that John's Gospel says 'shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it' (John 1:5)."

*I will Light Candles this Christmas*

by Howard Thurman

I will light Candles this Christmas;  
Candles of joy despite all sadness,  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,  
Candles of courage for fears ever present,  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,  
Candles of love to inspire all my living,  
Candles that will burn all the year long.

Let us begin these Advent and Christmas seasons lighting those candles Thurman envisioned — candles of joy, hope, courage, peace, grace and love.

-Rev. John McKinnon

# Music for Advent & Christmas

The Advent and Christmas seasons are always special times for music at FPC and, even though we can't have our full roster of ensembles, the music department will still have lots of great carols and music for the season!

Our four-person "choir" will sing a number of favorite anthems, including "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and "Of the Father's Love Begotten," and there will be selections from Handel's Messiah, including Jen Coffman singing "O Thou that Tellest Good Tidings to Zion" and Cady Lewis singing "Rejoice Greatly," as well as some original compositions by Puffer Jones. On Christmas Eve, John Edwards will play an extended prelude, and we'll have the traditional Lessons & Carols service, including "O Holy Night!"

## Favorite Christmas Carols

What are your favorite Christmas Carols? Send a list of some of your favorites to Puffer ([puffer@fpcokc.org](mailto:puffer@fpcokc.org)) or call the church office (405-525-6584). We'll try to include as many as possible in our worship services in Advent and on Christmas Eve!

## ADVENTure To-go

### Chrismons for Christmas

This year we cannot gather for ADVENTure, so ADVENTure is coming to you! You are encouraged to join us in making a Chrismon ornament for your tree this year. Everything you will need to create your very own Chrismon will be mailed to your home.

A Chrismon tree is an evergreen tree often placed in the chancel of a church during Advent and Christmastide. The evergreen tree itself symbolizes the eternal life Jesus Christ provides. The Chrismon tree differs from the traditional Christmas tree in that it is decorated only...

with clear lights and Chrismons made from white and gold material, the two being the liturgical colors of the Christmas season.

The Chrismon tree is adorned with Chrismons, ancient symbols for Christ or some part of Christ's ministry. Common examples include the dove descending, fish, the Celtic cross, the Jerusalem cross, the shepherd's crook, a chalice and many others.

We hope you will enjoy!

## Reserve the Third

**December 4 & 5 | 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**

Our last Reserve the Third this year will involve our traditional Christmas activities, but with a twist. Fran Smith has diligently worked with The Urban Mission to find out their needs and it turns out the traditional Christmas Food Boxes will come to them prepacked from a group called Farm to Table at no expense to us.

Therefore, instead of helping with that effort we will be purchasing and packaging 370 hygiene bags.

- On Friday, Fran will need four individuals to help set up an assembly line. This is expected to take between one and two hours.
- On Saturday, because of the needed Covid precautions of at least six feet between volunteers, we will take empty bags and go from station to station, filling it with items until full. The bags will then be placed in a large container and the process will repeat itself until we've finished. It is anticipated this will take between two and three hours.

Of course, all of us are expected to wear a mask and maintain proper social distancing. If you have any questions, please contact Roane Pittman ([johnpittmanmd@pnfmc.com](mailto:johnpittmanmd@pnfmc.com)).

If you wish to bring a friend that would be great! Please RSVP to Roane by **December 1** so we can make sure we have the proper numbers to successfully and efficiently do this mission work.

# Presbyterian Women (PW)

## Winter Fundraiser

Presbyterian Women are selling custom FPC mugs for their winter fundraiser this year! The mug is 15 ounces and made of stoneware. These mugs will be perfect for your morning coffee, afternoon tea or hot chocolate.

Each mug is \$12. PW will be selling mugs after service on Sundays. You can also email [office@fpcokc.org](mailto:office@fpcokc.org) to order or fill out an order form at [fpcokc.org/pw](http://fpcokc.org/pw).

You can pay for your mug(s) in two ways:

1. At church: Place your cash or check (payable to Presbyterian Women) in PW's mailbox.
2. Venmo App: Send to @pwfpcokc and put "mug" in memo area.

**Priscilla Circle (via Zoom) — Tuesday, December 8 | 10:00 a.m.**

[Link](#)

Meeting ID: 845 1729 9797

Passcode: 893559

**Phoebe Circle (via Zoom) — Tuesday, December 8 | 1:30 p.m.**

[Link](#)

Meeting ID: 890 3739 5125

Passcode: 204044



## Joint Circle Meeting — Tuesday, December 8 | 7:00 p.m.

The PW Circles are joining to host a special guest speaker. Sharon Collins is the author of “Becoming His Masterpiece,” a unique devotional that pairs stunning abstract art with Christian devotionals.

Join the meeting to be inspired and take a look at art and faith in a new light. Sharon will be speaking about her devotional as well as her faith journey and the inspiration for her writing.

Sharon has 20 books available from Kathy Berry or you can purchase online ([faithandartintersect.com/book](http://faithandartintersect.com/book)).

### [Link](#)

Meeting ID: 850 1195 5148

Passcode: 362847

## KirkNight To-go

Pick up a delicious KirkNight To-go meal this December! To order, call, text or email Jenn Snow at 405-408-3608 or [jenn@junebugcatering.com](mailto:jenn@junebugcatering.com).

Meals will be available for pick-up from 4:30-5:30 p.m. by the ramp behind the kitchen.

**Family Meal for 4-6:** \$20 | Dessert \$5.00

**Meal for 2:** \$10 | Dessert \$2.50

### UPCOMING MEALS:

**December 2:** Traditional Pot Roast with Carrots and Potatoes and Chocolate Stout Cake

**December 9:** Smothered Pork Chops, Roasted Carrots, Stuffing and Christmas Cookies

# Children & Youth

## Cupcake Christmas Celebration

Sunday, December 20 | 4:00 p.m.

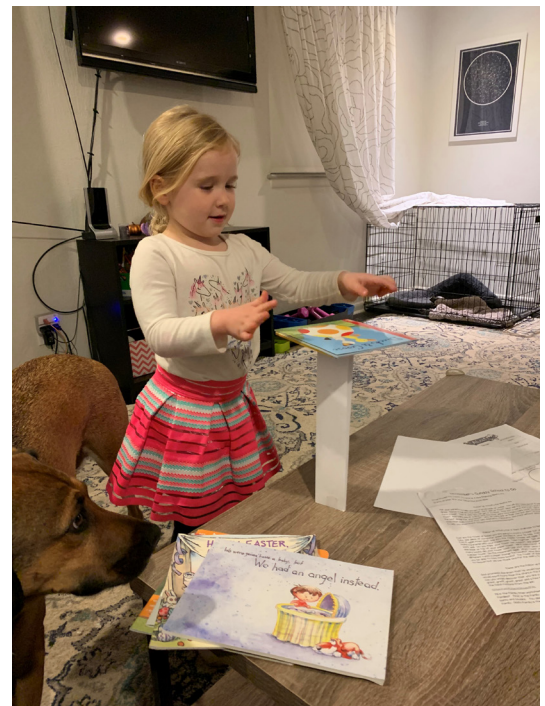
Sunday School children and their families are invited to a Zoom birthday party for Baby Jesus! Cupcakes will be delivered to you before the event.



We will sing “Happy Birthday,” enjoy our cupcakes and Miss Cyndi will read a story. We hope you can make this fun holiday event.

## December SS Bags

Sunday School children have been receiving a Sunday School Bag To-go each month since October. The first month, the bag included a children’s Bible that was appropriate for the child’s age. The bags include follow-up activities to stories from the Bible along with most of the supplies to complete the activities.



December Sunday School bags will come a little early

and contain the things for Advent. The first will be a daily family Advent devotional. There will also be a starry, Bethlehem-themed Advent calendar for the children to create and use during the season.

Finally, there will be a wooden angel for the children to paint before adding it to their Christmas tree.

# Christmas Joy Offering

## Sunday, December 20

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reflects God's gift to us, through the Christmas Joy Offering, with generous gifts supporting church leaders – retired, present and future – who have pointed us to God.

Even as we support our current and former church leaders through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, God is calling new leaders for our Church and world, through the ministry of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color — offering students the means for a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come.

- 50% of your gifts to Christmas Joy provides assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial need.
- 50% makes it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

You can give your Christmas Joy Offering through our congregation, by texting JOY to 56512 or online at [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](https://pcusa.org/christmasjoy).

## Holiday Family Favorites

This year we are on the search for amazing Holiday Family Favorites! Submit your favorite family recipe to share with the whole congregation.

We want all the good stuff. Give us grandma's famous stuffing, the dessert no one can resist or a unique dish we've never tried.

We'll be releasing a new recipe each week in the E-blast, so be sure to sign up! (You can email [office@fpcokc.org](mailto:office@fpcokc.org) to join the email list.)

## **Grandmother Helen Rickard's No Bake Pumpkin Cheesecake**

This recipe comes from Michelle Evans' grandmother. Helen Rickard, who was a member of FPC, would make this every year for Thanksgiving. It quickly became an Evans Family favorite!

### **Ingredients:**

- 8 oz. cream cheese (softened)
- 1 cup + 1 tablespoon milk (divided)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 8 oz. whipped topping
- Graham cracker crust (my grandma used a homemade ginger snap crust, but this substitute works great too)
- 15 oz. pumpkin (canned)
- 2 packages instant vanilla pudding (4 servings size each)
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. pumpkin spice

### **Instructions:**

1. Beat together the cream cheese, 1 tablespoon of milk and sugar in a large bowl. Fold in 1/2 of the whipped topping and spread in the graham cracker crust.
2. Whisk together 1 cup of milk, pumpkin, dry pudding mixes and spices until creamy. Spread over the cream cheese layer.
3. Top with the remaining 1/2 tub whipped topping and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

If you'd like to add your recipe to our collection, please email [blake@fpcokc.org](mailto:blake@fpcokc.org). Once we have collected all of the recipes, they will be combined in a booklet that will be posted on our website and printed by request.

Submit your recipe by **December 13** to be included.

## In-Person Worship

During the pandemic, when allowed to do so, the Session of First Presbyterian has allowed in-person worship in addition to livestreaming all services. In order to do this as safely as possible, worshippers are required to wear a mask at all times while inside the building. Worshippers are separated when seated in the Sanctuary by eight feet front to back, with a minimum of six feet between individuals or an individual and a household group, decreasing capacity by 90%.

Even with these measures, the safest place for you to worship is from your own home. We appreciate the large number of members that are joining us faithfully week after week using the website and Facebook. We are currently upgrading our livestreaming ability to enhance that experience.

We rejoice and give thanks to God that this is temporary. We give thanks to God for the progress being made toward effective, safe vaccines and that we are one day closer to being able to come back together as a congregation in ways we long for.

The Session is responsible for worship and for the entire mission and ministry of a particular Presbyterian Church. This is an unprecedented time to carry such responsibility. Please pause at the end of reading this article and pray for them. Pray for the men and women you have identified to guide this congregation. Pray for their wisdom and endurance as they continue to shepherd God's people through a difficult time.

## Christmas Eve Services

**On Christmas Eve**, we will have a **Young and Young at Heart service at 4:00 p.m.** and our **Service of Lessons and Carols at 10:30 p.m.** (the prelude will begin at 10:00 p.m.). Both services will be held in the Sanctuary.

At the time of this printing, both will be in person and livestreamed. We will continue to monitor community spread and post updates as necessary.

Masks are required to be worn at all times during both services. Worshippers will be spaced in excess of CDC guidelines. Seating for both services is reserved and limited to church members and their families until **December 15**. At that time, if there are remaining seats, they will be available to the community.

Please call (405-525-6584) or email the church office (office@fpcokc.org) to request the number of seats you would like to reserve. If you've already completed the Christmas Eve service survey, your reservations have been made.

## **December Birthdays**

Happy birthday to all!

<b>01:</b> Mary Fitzhugh, Scott Roberts	<b>14:</b> Caroline Holson	<b>23:</b> Lauren Teague
<b>02:</b> Jim Lowe, John Benn	<b>15:</b> Lisa Cochrane	<b>26:</b> Suzanne Baxter
<b>03:</b> Janet Eselin, John Harris	<b>16:</b> Abby Sholar	<b>27:</b> Jole Schrimsher
<b>04:</b> Emily Bunch	<b>17:</b> Bill Vassar	<b>28:</b> Jenny Vincent, Phyllis Mills, Riley Woods
<b>05:</b> Rachel Morse	<b>20:</b> John Vogt	<b>29:</b> Amy Denner
<b>06:</b> Debbie Pittman	<b>21:</b> Jana Winfree, William Collins, Elliott Taylor, Justin Papineau	<b>30:</b> Lillian Keith
<b>11:</b> Elizabeth Hatcher	<b>22:</b> Robert Cochrane, Everette Altdoerffer, Jim Beeson	<b>31:</b> Joanna McCarty
<b>12:</b> Sophia Smith, Kate Sholar		

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All are welcome! First Presbyterian Church is affiliated with The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

For more information, please contact the church office at 405-525-6584 or email office @fpcokc.org

## Poinsettias

Help us adorn our Sanctuary for Christmas with poinsettias in honor, memory or celebration of a loved one(s). They will be displayed in the Sanctuary starting Sunday, December 20, and be included in a listing of memorials and celebrations.

Pick up an order form in the church office or email the church office (office@fpcokc.org) with your order. Be sure to include: # of poinsettias, who they are dedicated to, what your relationship to them is, and if the poinsettias are *in memory of*, *in honor of*, or *in celebration of*.

**Deadline:** December 13

**Cost:** \$15

**Ways to pay:** Cash, check or Venmo (@fpcokc)