



“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are”

By PASTOR ERIC O. LEDERMANN

The title above is emblazoned on the cover of the most recent issues of Horizons magazine, a magazine for Presbyterian Women. Regardless of your gender identification, you would do well to subscribe to Horizons. The publishers even provide a cut out on the first page so you can tape the phrase on your bathroom mirror, complete with an image of a cairn—a pile of carefully stacked stones used to mark important or sacred places. I couldn't help think that the most sacred spot in our lives is where ever we are in a given moment, because that is where we are. I think that's what the spiritual gurus through the ages might call, “mindfulness.”

I have come to understand prayer more in terms of “mindfulness.” The headline on the front of Horizons took me there immediately. Mindfulness is, at least in part, doing what I can, with what I have, where I am. We can Monday morning coach or quarterback our weekends or our lives all we want, but we cannot change what is past. We can, however, learn from those markers, those piles of stones in our past, in an effort to practice being more mindful—more aware—in the present and future. We can decide

to change our trajectory if we need to. This is where prayer can be helpful. This, I believe, is what Jesus practiced and taught.

Fundamentally prayer is a tool we have to help us seek God in our lives; to help us grow closer to God and, thereby, learn to hear God in our lives, our breath, and even in the breath of others. The more we become aware of God's presence around us, within us, and in others, the more attuned our spirits can become to recognizing God and the movements and motions of God's Spirit around us, within us, and in others.

Beginning on page 8 of the Nov/Dec issue of Horizons, Sarahlee Morris, a spiritual director in Lubbock, Texas, offers fifteen different ways of praying—different ways of listening for and seeking to pay attention (or be mindful) of God and the movements of God's Holy Spirit. While Morris borrows one of Anne Lamott's definitions of prayer, “... communicating from one's heart to God,” most of the practices seem to focus more in the other direction, tuning our spiritual frequencies to God. While the intentions of so much of our prayer is communicating to God, done long enough, humble

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This issue of the
UPC NEWS & Current Events
is brought to you by...
the word...

Abundant

Developed in Middle English around the 14th century (*abundaunt*) from the Old French *abondant* and directly from the Latin *abundantem* or *abundāns*, meaning “overflowing, full, abounding, in copious quantity or supply.” In Christian theology we often talk about God's abundance—the abundance of God's love, grace, justice, creation, etc. In addition to “overflowing,” abundant can also refer to the idea of being “fully sufficient”—in other words, “enough.”

Abundance is what God offers us through Jesus: an abundance of love to be shared; an abundance of compassion; an abundance of grace and forgiveness.

(Continued from page 1)

enough, and consistently enough I believe we cannot help but begin to become attuned to God's frequency (not to be confused with the rather gimmicky program called "The God Frequency" that promises to "manifest God's blessings" in 15 minutes per day).

Like an athlete working out and practicing regularly, prayer helps keep us in spiritual shape when the inevitable hiccups and challenges in life come at us. The Rev. Elaine Murray—a pastor, spiritual direction, and trauma therapist in training—offers some practical advice for daily life and getting through the rough spots on the trail of life: hydrate (always good advice), pay attention to your body (or take the time to learn how to listen to your body), practice regular sabbath, allow yourself to grieve in a healthy and life-giving way even small losses in your life by giving thanks for what was lost, and, most of all, make plans lightly (be open to changes so that you can be open to those movements of God's Spirit).

On page 15, the Rev. Kikanza Nuri-Robbins captures all this beautifully in her first sentence: "Life is the embodiment of the possible." She knows this all too well as an organization development consultant in Los Angeles. She works with people and orgs in transition. She elaborates further: "Each day we move through the possibilities created by promises and hopes, fears and hurts, angers and frustrations."

The good, the bad, and the mundane all have something to teach us about the possible.

It is a new year, again. It is a somewhat artificial cairn of time, but it helps mark significant moments in our lives. I suggest that most of those markers are also moments of change—moments that change, even if imperceptibly, our trajectory. Many see the New Year as an opportunity to start anew. I've never been much for "New Year resolutions." By week three or four I've thrown them out the window. But like the athlete metaphor, if we practice our spiritual mindfulness regularly, the New Year can be an opportunity to assess and evaluate, rather than starting over or anew. Looking back over the challenges and triumphs of the past year can create space for us to learn, grow, and move our lives ever closer in tune with God's frequency. The challenges won't go away (e.g., the pandemic will still be with us for a while), but we may be able to gain skills and tools, as well as attitude, to navigate those challenges in ever-more healthy ways. Instead of wishing for better days, you may get ever better at "doing what you can, with what you have, where you are." ■

*Be of good courage
and know that you are loved!*

MONTHLY DRIVE 'n' DROP

January 2 2021, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Normally First Sunday of each month! Drop off at church!

TCAA has requested **breakfast items** for the homeless and those needing food boxes. Here are the items needed for TCAA and UPC Refugee Ministry



- tuna
- beans
- canned Meats
- ramen noodles
- canned vegetables
- soups
- breakfast items
- towels/washcloths
- baby wipes
- travel snacks

Financial contributions may be sent to the office. Make checks out to "TCAA" and reference "Food Pantry" or to UPC and reference "Refugee" in the memo



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UPC NEWS & Current Events is published monthly. Submissions of announcements, stories, op-eds, and reflections on recent events at UPC are welcomed.

Requirements:

Announcements: 500 words or less
Articles/Reflections: 1200 words or less
Letters to the Editor: 750 words or less
Submissions may be edited for content, grammar, and space available.

Send submissions
by the 20th of each month to:
newsletter@upctempe.org

RiseShine Bread Booming

By ANDREA WHITE

As the new year is upon us, RiseShineBread is up and running!! In the last quarter of the year, we delivered approximately 500 mini-loaves of bread to I-HELP locations and the TCAA Food Pantry. We also have started baking full-sized loaves, and delivered 38 to TCAA in mid-December.

Our next challenge is to provide 300 mini-loaves for Project Connect, which will be held on January 11 at UPC. We are expecting about 300 people with housing insecurity who will have access to a number of social service resources.

If you can help bake or distribute bread, please join our team by signing up at: riseshinebread.org. Or you can choose to donate to cover our packaging costs, or so that we can supply peanut butter/jelly with the bread.

Here is a link to a video you can view for more information: <https://youtu.be/Go5lLLjTuw>

Please contact Andrea White at info@riseshinebread.org or (480) 580-3021 for more information.

We also thank Curt and Linda Ritland for delivering some of our delicious breads.. (Pictured here)

Thanks in advance for your help!■



The UPC Book Club introduces: **The Vanishing Half**

By BRIT BENNETT

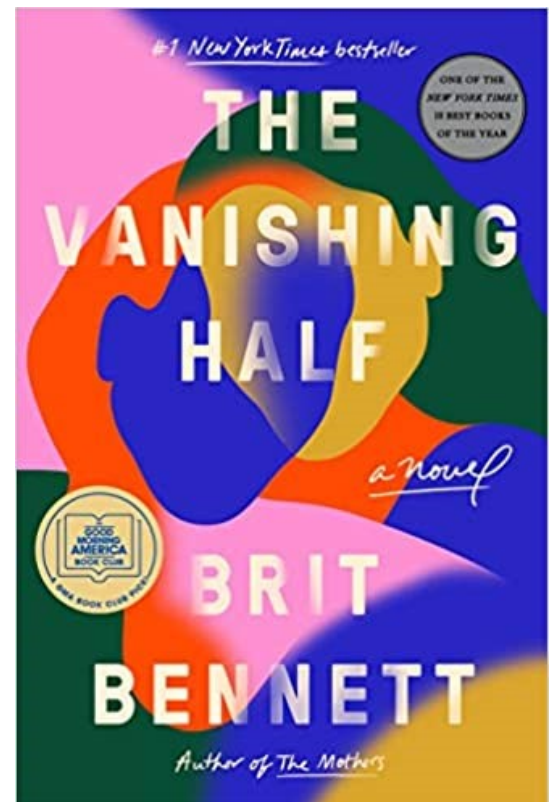
As young girls, Desiree and Stella Vignes, grow up in Mallard, Louisiana, a town founded on colorist principals. Though the twins' family is light-skinned, and therefore accepted by their community, Desiree and Stella feel entrapped in their hometown.

In New Orleans, the twins work for Dixie Laundry on a low wage. After Stella is fired, Desiree encourages her to apply for a secretarial job at Maison Blanche. Passing for white, Stella gets the job. Here she meets her boss, Blake Sanders. Enamored with Stella, he actively pursues her. Stella realizes her new white identity affords her privileges her real identity does not allow. She decides to abandon her old life, lying to Blake and telling him her family was dead. Having split from her sister, Desiree started a relationship with a dark-skinned African American, Sam Winston. When their marriage turned abusive, Desiree fled back to Mallard with her young daughter, Jude.

Over a decade after leaving, Desiree appears back in her hometown. Adele is shocked to see her daughter, and even more surprised to see how dark her daughter is. Though Desiree promises Jude to leave Mallard eventually, the two remain there for many years. Eventually, Desiree begins a relationship with her childhood romance, Early Jones. Though they do not marry, they have a lifelong partnership.

Years later, Jude leaves Mallard for California, where she begins attending UCLA. Here she meets Reese Carter, and begins a deep relationship. The two help one another make amends with their pasts, and embrace their true selves...

Please join us on January 21 at 7pm at our Book Club Meeting to share your thoughts and discuss this riveting tale..■



Presbyterian Women

Christmas Angel Tree - A BIG Success



By CHERYL HARDY

Like the Magi with gifts for baby Jesus, our congregation has again provided gifts for almost 50 children in Tempe. When the Tempe Elementary School District social workers picked up the gifts last month they were amazed by our generosity. We were also able to provide almost \$2000.00 in gift cards for food and support for those families in need. The PW mission team thanks all those who participated in the Angel Tree event.

How do we begin to tell you how you all have blessed others this past year? What may seem like fulfilling a request on the Angel Tree is really so much more. You have provided love in a tangible way to families who have experienced stress and hardship and have resiliently prevailed. Your care serves as recognition that their efforts to get through hard times are not unnoticed. Although a humbling and hard experience for many, there is also the gratitude that comes forward from each family. Folks feeling so touched that someone who has never met them really cares. ■

Other PW News...

PW Christmas Boutique

Our 2021 Christmas Boutique was a huge success due to the talents of crafters and bakers. PW made nearly \$900.00 for our many mission focuses! A special Thank-you goes out to all our participants that made items and those who bought our goodies.

Mission Month, 2022

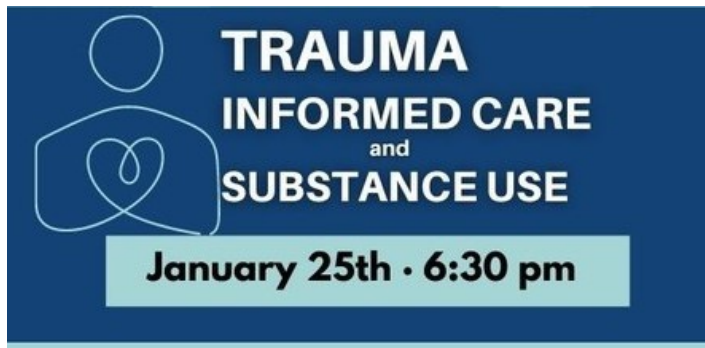
"Faith in Action" will be the focus of our February Mission Month. Specific attention will go to the continued efforts to reopen Montlure in the near future and on the many mission projects of Presbyterian Women.

Bible Study

Chris Casanova and Bev Phillips will be leading a CE class on "What My Grandmother Taught Me" in January and the circles will continue their study with a focus on Ruth (Lessons 4 and 5).

Mission Focus

Our focus for the month of January is "mission giving." ■



Trauma Informed Care (TIC) expert Rev. Sanghoon Yoo (The Faithful City) presents how to apply trauma informed care to the faith principles and practices, facilitating healing and resilience. He has been collaborating with Tracy Cruickshank (Maricopa County Dept. of Public Health) and other faith leaders to support substance use prevention efforts. The effective training model for the faith community on TIC-based substance use prevention will be discussed for future collaboration. [REGISTER FOR ZOOM LINK](#)



Where Do We Go From Here: Voting Rights in Arizona

Learn what happened in Arizona throughout the 2021 Legislative Session and what to expect in the new year. Join people of faith as we unite to protect our cherished right to vote in Arizona. [Register to receive Zoom link](#) (find full link at www.arizonafaitnetwork.org/newsletter, scroll down).

Learn more about the Arizona Faith Network by subscribing to the newsletter at:

www.arizonafaitnetwork.org/subscribe



Thursday, Jan. 6, 4-6 p.m
Arizona Capitol, 1700 W Washington St, Phoenix, AZ, 85007

As the nation prepares for the anniversary of the Jan 6th insurrection, a coalition of non-partisan democracy defenders calls on the public to mobilize and stand with us for **Peace at the Polls**. This is not just in response to the Jan 6th insurrection and violence at the capitol, but against the growing call to violence against our democracy. Join the Arizona Faith Network, The African American Christian Clergy Coalition, Mi Familia Vota, The Services Employees International Union, AFL/CIO, RAZE (Rural Arizona Coalition), AAPINH Unity and Action and other Declaration For American Democracy organizations in Arizona as they prepare to embark on a year of action. To [RSVP](#) go to www.arizonafaitnetwork.org/newsletter and scroll down.



ARIZONA FOOD SYSTEMS NETWORK

Join the anti-hunger and food systems advocacy calls with the Arizona Food Bank Network and the Arizona Food System Network, held every other Friday. More information and recordings of past calls are available at: <https://www.azfsn.org/>

Presbyterians Discuss How the Pandemic Might Change Plans for 2022 General Assembly

— and whether a vaccination requirement will be needed

By **LESLIE SCANLON**

The Presbyterian Outlook

Vaccinations may be required to attend committee meetings of the 2022 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) – although that decision hasn't been made yet. The PC(USA) also is considering alternate options for holding the 2022 General Assembly should the COVID-19 pandemic morph again – including the possibility of holding the assembly entirely virtually.

The current plan for General Assembly 2022 is a hybrid model with committee meetings in Louisville June 20 to July 3 and plenary sessions online June 18 and July 5-9. Church leaders hope that this strategy will hold, Julia Henderson, interim director of assembly operations, said during the first day of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly's Sept. 27-29 Zoom meeting.

Given the way the pandemic keeps changing, "we also know we could be in full lockdown again by the time the General Assembly comes around," Henderson said. So the staff of the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) is keeping an eye on reports of COVID-19 variants being detected in other countries and

considering options for how the current plans may be modified if needed.

Some possibilities:

Holding committee meetings in person but socially distancing them by utilizing more space in the Presbyterian Center in downtown Louisville.

Revising the committee schedule so no overlapping sessions would be held – something that had been planned to give commissioners more opportunities to interact.

Allowing for hybrid committee participation – with commissioners and advisory delegates given choices about whether they want to attend in-person or online.

Holding the whole assembly virtually, as was done in 2020. The OGA staff is developing lists of pros and cons for each option, is considering the financial implications of each, and is talking to representatives of other denominations, Henderson said.

The final decision would be up to COGA, said Kerry Rice, the PC(USA)'s deputy stated clerk.

Another piece of the work: a conversation with the Administrative Services Group and leadership of the Presbyterian Youth Triennium (scheduled to be

held July 24-27 in Indianapolis) about possibly convening an advisory panel with expertise, to provide guidance on how the church might respond in particular scenarios.

Will vaccinations or COVID testing be required for commissioners and advisory delegates?

"We're kind of leaving the door open for that as we get advice from folks who are guided by science," Henderson said. "We really want to be right on the science first, and then we'll figure everything else out."

So if someone doesn't want to be vaccinated, "you can still claim it as an individual, but you can't rely on Presbyterian theology or polity to back you up in that claim," Rice said.

Based in part on that, the Presbyterian Center is getting close to requiring a vaccination mandate for all who visit or work in the building, Rice said. "That would impact all commissioners and advisory delegates," and anyone else wanting to come to the building for the assembly." He added, "we are closing in on consensus" regarding that requirement – but COGA could also act to require vaccinations or testing for all in-person General Assembly participants. ■



Let's Talk Podcasts

Are you in need of spiritual inspiration? You've come to the right place! Christian podcasts can help you strengthen your beliefs and give you pockets of time to reflect on what matters most. Here is one of the best Christian podcasts of 2021 to enhance your worship and strengthen your devotion.

MADE FOR THIS is hosted by Jennie Allen who is a passionate leader following God's call on her life to catalyze a generation of women to live what they believe. In this twice weekly podcast, Jennie features short, fun, and real conversations about the struggles people face, and how God sets us free. Two episodes release each week – one episode of Jennie teaching and one interview.

[Click here to listen.](#)



Hopeful New Year's Resolutions

By REBECCA BARLOW JORDAN and
DEBBIE MCDANIEL
Christianity.com

Prayer for a Victorious New Year

Lord Jesus, I come to you in this brand new year with a desire to move forward, not backward. Last year is gone and with it all the foolish mistakes I made. I'm eager to put the past behind and to press on toward the mark of knowing you, loving you, serving you, and making Your name known in this coming year.

I need You, Lord. Without You, I can't meet the heavy demands of life or the unrelenting pressures that I'll face this coming year. I am making a new commitment today—not a New Year's resolution—but a new desire to place You where You always belong, first place in my life. Make the "I will's" of Scripture become my affirmations: "I will trust You; I will praise You; I will follow You." I will replace fear with faith, knowing You are always with me. And with You on my side, it will be a victorious New Year.

I lay down my broken armor, my rusty tools, my self-defenses, and every excuse I've used for not living victoriously. Purge my bad habits; free me from wrong expectations; and fill my heart, soul, and mind with praiseworthy thoughts and actions. My life is Yours; my relationships belong to You; everything I have is Yours, Jesus. Set my feet on the right path this year, and grant wisdom so I can make the right choices that will honor You. Let me see others as You see them, as precious ones You created. Renew the gifts and abilities You've so

generously given me so I can bless others as You've blessed me.

Because of Your love and the price, You paid for my sin, I can not only enjoy a victorious new year but a triumphant life. You put a new "want-to" in my life and in my heart. And as the calendar turns another page in this brand new year, I want more than ever, to live it for You. There is no battle in my life too great with You in my life. There is victory in You, Jesus! - Rebecca Barlow-Jordan

Prayer for Hope After a Difficult Year

Dear God, Thank you for helping us to make it through this difficult year. Thank you that you've carried us through the uncertainty of deep waters, through the flames of trials, and through the pain of hard losses. We are constantly aware of how much we need you, your grace, your strength, your power working through even the toughest days.

Fill us with your joy and the peace of your Spirit. Direct our hearts and minds towards you. Thank you for your reminder that both in seasons of celebration and in seasons of brokenness, you're still with us. For you never leave us. Thank you for your daily powerful Presence in our lives, that we can be assured your heart is towards us, your eyes are over us, and your ears are open to our prayers. Thank you that you surround us with favor as with a shield, and we are safe in your care.

We choose to press in close to you today and keep you first in our hearts and lives. Without You, we would surely fail, but with you, there is great hope. Thank you for your healing power, thank you for bringing us into this new season up ahead. We look forward to all that You still have in store. In Jesus' Name, Amen. - Debbie McDaniel

Project Connect—Volunteers Needed

Be our guest at Project Connect!

Who: All individuals and families, who are in need of assistance with housing, shelter, benefits, identification, and other basic health and human services. Our services are concentrated on serving people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

What: Employment services, medical care, clothing, personal care items, spiritual support, family and legal services, behavioral health, substance abuse services, domestic violence resources, shelter providers, haircuts, food, showers, bicycle repair, DES, Veteran benefits, and more

When: Tuesday, January 11th, 2022

Arrive between 8:00 AM and 2:30 PM for services

Where: University Presbyterian Church - 139 East Alameda Drive, Tempe, AZ. 85282

How to get there: Walk, bicycle, drive, carpool with a friend, or bus (Tempe Orbit Jupiter)

How to get there: Walk, bicycle, drive, carpool with a friend, or bus (Tempe Orbit Jupiter)

Shuttles will run between 8 and 10 am from the following locations:

- Tempe Beach Park
- Kiwanis Park (Parking lot along South All American Way across from tennis courts)
- St Vincent de Paul Mesa Dining Room 67 W. Broadway Rd. Mesa, AZ 85210
- Food City Parking Lot (Scottsdale Road south of McKellips)



Volunteers are needed for the following days:

Monday, January 10th: Project Connect set up from noon until 5:00 pm.

Tuesday, January 11th: Project Connect 7:00 am until 4:30 pm

Wednesday, January 12th: Project Connect clean up from 8:00 am until 2:00 pm.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Faye Gardner at coloradogardners@me.com or (719) 310-7191



We're a
Matthew 25
church
pcusa.org/matthew25

The Mitchells — Installment No. 29

By ERIC O. LEDERMANN

The holiday season came and went as the new year slowly and quietly ushered itself in. The Mitchell's Christmas celebration was tempered this year. They decided against going to the annual family gathering at Mrs. Mitchell's parents' farm in Akron, Ohio. Her brother, Chip, decided to get part of the family together anyway. Despite her protests, Mrs. Mitchell's parents agreed to host. They are generally healthy for their age, but with the coronavirus spreading fast again, she was concerned. They promised to wear masks the whole time.

Mr. Mitchell's small family was all in Vermont. A much smaller crowd than Mrs. Mitchell's family, but still not worth the risk. Both sets of parents were aging. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell agreed they did not want to be the cause of their parents' demise.

Instead, it was staying home on Christmas Eve—a first for the Mitchells. They attended First Presbyterian's worship online via YouTube on the family room TV. It was nice snuggling under blankets and hot chocolate, the Christmas tree in the corner with a few presents under it awaiting the morning, and celebrating the gift of Jesus.

"Dad," Donny started as the choir began singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem, "if Jesus wasn't really born on December 25th, why do we celebrate his birthday on that date?"

Mr. Mitchell smiled. It had been a while since his 16-year-old son had even mentioned anything remotely religious.

Sarah, the 13-year-old, piped up with a little bit of shock in her face, "Wait, Jesus wasn't born on December 25th?"

Joyce, the youngest at 11 years old, couldn't help herself, leaning forward with great enthusiasm, "I don't care when he was born, as long as I get presents!"

Her comment didn't get the laugh she had hoped for. She slowly sank back into the couch next to her sister.

Mr. Mitchell looked at Sarah and Donny as he responded, "No, it is highly unlikely that Jesus was born on December 25th. The truth is, we don't know when he was born. Some suggest it was springtime. I don't really know. But we celebrate his birth on December 25th because it is so close to the winter solstice, the coldest and longest night of the year for those of us in the northern hemisphere because we're farthest from the sun. After December 21st, the nights slowly getting shorter and the days slowly get longer. A long time ago people

needed some cheering up on these cold winter nights, so they had these long parties around December 21st that would last often until December 25th or longer. The parties kinda got out of hand, so a local bishop decided to reshape the winter solstice celebration and invite people into a practice of giving thanks. And what could we ever be more thankful for than Jesus? I think Pastor Cobb said one year that Christmas, or the Christ mass as it used to be called, started sometime in the 4th century. That's about 1700 years ago."

Donny thought for a moment and then said, "That's a long time. I guess it's good that the bishop did that. I know I could give thanks a lot more than I do."

Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell looked at each other with puzzled looks.

"You could?" Mrs. Mitchell asked.

"Well, yeah," Donny started. "I feel like most of my life I've just taken things as they come. I don't think I get really angry at things that are bad, but I'm also not very thankful for the good stuff."

Sarah asked quickly and excitedly, "Like me?"

"Nah," Donny responded with a smirk. "Just kidding, yeah, I guess I'm thankful for you being my sister."

"What about me?" Joyce asked, still a little sore that her joke fell flat.

"Yeah," Donny said. "I'm thankful for you, too. Well, when you're not being annoying."

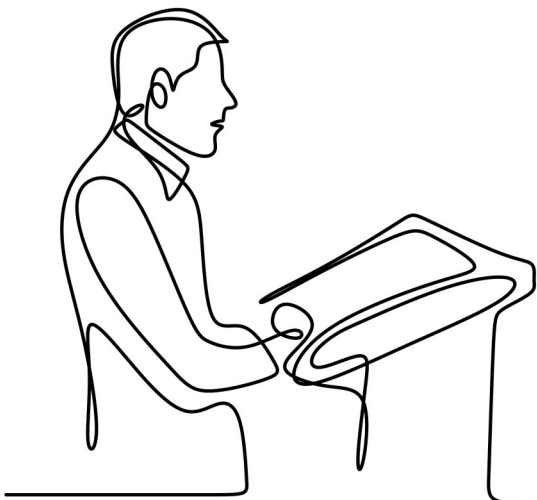
Joyce smiled, figuring she'll take what she can get.

"Well," Mrs. Mitchell interjected, "your father and I are thankful for all three of you." She reached over to pet their German Shepherd Bree who was sitting next to couch, seemingly at attention. "I'm even thankful for you, Bree ... that is, when you're not chewing stuff up."

They all chuckled a bit. Bree was older now, but still acted a lot like a puppy.

As the choir's anthem came to a close

See THE MITCHELLS on page 10



THE MITCHELLS

Continued from page 9

on the TV, Mrs. Mitchell commented, “I love that song.”

Mr. Dawn, the director of Christian education, stood up at the lectern and began reading the second scripture from Luke’s gospel, chapter 2. He was a really good reader—slow and deliberate, with a lot of voice inflection. He made the texts really come alive. On the side he did voice overs professionally, so that helped.

He only read the first part of the chapter. Then someone the Mitchell’s didn’t recognize came to the lectern to read the second half. He wore jeans and a long sleeved button down shirt. They looked a little shabby, especially for Christmas eve. The wildness of his beard matched the wildness of his hair.

He began, “Most of you don’t know me. You may have seen me showing up for worship over the last few weeks. I’m new to First Presbyterian. My name is Alex. Pastor Cobb was kind of enough to ask me to help read one of tonight’s scriptures. But before I do, I want to say thank you to Pastor Cobb and Ms. Gentry, for their kindness and hospitality. They also helped me reconnect with some of my family who I have not seen in a lot of years. We’ve only talked on the phone, but I’m hoping to see some of them soon. A Christmas miracle, I guess you might say. So, thank you, and thanks to all of you. I’m thankful for First Presbyterian. I felt drawn here for reasons

I’m still not entirely sure of. But I’m glad I answered that call. Mary has a lot to teach us about listening for and accepting those calls in life. So, I invite us to listen for God’s Word through Luke, chapter 2, continuing with verse 8. The shepherds get to hear the good news first. They’re the ones who slept out in the wilderness with their sheep, and I imagine they didn’t smell or look very good most of the time—kinda like me most of the time.”

The sparse gathering of people in the sanctuary could be heard chuckling a bit.

Alex read slowly and nervously through verse 20, and added, “Let us all treasure these things and ponder them in our hearts, like Mary.” He then sat down back down next to Pastor Cobb on the short pew behind the pulpit. As the choir stood to sing another song, Pastor Cobb could be seen on the far left of the screen nodding and giving Alex a thumbs up.

“What was all that about?” Mrs. Mitchell asked.

A bit bewildered, Mr. Mitchell responded slowly, “I have no idea.”

“Who’s Alex?” Sarah asked. “I don’t recognize him. Is he new?”

Mr. Mitchell said, “I think so. I don’t recognize him either. But, evidently something happened. Pastor Cobb and Ruth must have done something to help him.”

The rest of the service went as per usual. Pastor Cobb preached about focusing on the meaning behind the birth of Jesus rather than the facts of the birth

given in Matthew’s and Luke’s gospels, which are very different. “The meaning behind Jesus’s birth is really his life and how he showed us not only how much God loves us but how we might share God’s love by loving one another.”

He mentioned that in many ways, December 25th is a random date chosen to celebrate Jesus’s birth. Donny was paying close attention to that part. And then Pastor Cobb talked about how in the coldest, darkest, and loneliest nights of our lives, “remembering the gift God gave us in and through Jesus can give us strength by the power of God’s love to see us through those difficult nights.” He looked behind himself at Alex as he said that last part. Both Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell took notice.

Just about then, a text came over Mr. Mitchell’s phone. He felt the vibration in his pants pocket. He pulled his phone out and read a message from Pete Gossling: “Know anything about what’s going on between this Alex guy, Pastor Cobb, and Ruth?”

Mr. Mitchell responded: “Nope. I have no idea.”

“A mystery to be solved!” Pete responded.

Mr. Mitchell smiled and shook his head. Then he texted back: “Maybe. I trust Pastor Cobb and Ruth to handle it whatever it is. Merry Christmas, Pete, to you, Joselyn, and the kids.”

A moment later, Pete’s response came through: “And merry Christmas to you and your family as well! ■

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... and help spread the word!

POETRY CORNER

Listen to God's Spirit

By M.S. LOWNDES

We need to stand up for our faith
No matter what others do,
Even if our sisters and brothers fall,
We need to stand faithful and true

For we are not here to please ourselves,
Nor please those that we stand by,
The only one we should ever please
Is our Lord and saviour Christ

We need to remain sensitive
To what the Spirit says,
Don't listen to the differing voices,
For they'll only lead you astray

For many are influenced by this world,
Its views sound spiritual and good,
But when we look into the word of God,
We find they have not understood

Just what is written within God's word,
The truths that these pages hold,
For this is the truth that will set us free
Bringing soundness to our souls

So when you're faced with a situation
And you don't know if it is right,
When the Holy Spirit does not bear witness,
We can know that it's not of the light

For the Holy Spirit bears witness to truth
And gives us peace in our hearts
If we're debating issues in our minds,
We may be heading down the wrong path

Stop for a while and pray it through,
Lifting it up to Christ
Meditate on God's holy word,
For it's this that directs our lives

For as we do this, we will learn
To discern what is the truth
And we will grow into maturity
With a biblical faith that is true. ■

© M.S. Lowndes

I Dream of a Day...

By DAN ABBOTT

When...
Our drive for domination lessens and gives way to kindness.

When...
Our knee-jerk responses are tempered by forethought.

When...
Our walls are replaced by bridges, our guards by outstretched hands.

When...
Our ruthless selfishness is gradually overtaken by empathy.

When...
Our competition is replaced by a deep sense of inter-dependency.

When...
Our hostility is changed to a drive to walk with another, in their shoes.

When...
Compassion is inseparable from humanity.

When...
The emotions of love, compassion, gratitude, and forgiveness begin to
be more powerful than the need to control and dominate.

I dream of a better day. ■

Taken with liberties from Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life by Karen Armstrong (2009).





I-HELP

Until there's a place called HOME

UPC now hosts I-HELP every week, Friday through Sunday. Our faith partners and Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) help provide meals. UPC provides meals the third Friday and the following Saturday of each month.

For info on volunteering, contact Jill Russell, Bonnie Henry, or Cathy Richardson



ONLINE WORSHIP

REGISTER TODAY!

(In-person Worship began Aug 15th)

www.upctempe.org/worship

A confirmation email will be sent with a login link that is unique to you!

Services also live streamed to www.upctempe.org/YouTube.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK

(1-800-273-8255)

Talk to someone.

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States.

En Español: 1-888-628-9454

Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255

MORE THAN JUST COFFEE

CAFÉ JUSTO

Discover the Difference

The official coffee of choice at UPC

For sale by Sunday mornings or by contacting the church office

\$10 / lb.

MEXICO

THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE ROASTING

100% Pure Arabica Coffee

Provided by Ethical Choices

Worship Volunteer Schedule

Below is the schedule of worship volunteers for the next month. If you are listed and have a conflict, you are asked to please find a replacement and then contact Ruling Elder Sada Reed, co-chair of the Worship Committee.

To volunteer or get on one of the rotations, Sada Reed! Thank you!

January 2022

Sanctuary Readiness Team..... Larry Seubert

Jan. 2—2nd Sunday of Christmastide

Liturgist..... Dan Abbott
Children's Moment..... Dan Abbott
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Jim Niemann

Jan. 9—Baptism of Jesus

Liturgist..... Paul Green
Children's Moment..... Paul Green
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Sada Reed

Jan. 16—2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (MLK Holiday Weekend)

Liturgist..... Chris Casanova
Children's Moment..... Chris Casanova
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Jim Niemann

Jan. 23—3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist..... Rev. Shelly Moe
Children's Moment..... Rev. Shelly Moe
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Sada Reed

Jan. 30—4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist..... Nob Ichishita
Children's Moment..... Pastor Eric
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Jim Niemann

February 2022

Sanctuary Readiness Team..... Larry Seubert

Feb. 6—5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist..... Joan Grey
Children's Moment..... Vacant
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Sada Reed

Feb. 13—6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist..... Rev. Ken Moe
Children's Moment..... Rev. Shelly Moe
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Bianca Osorio

Feb. 20—7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

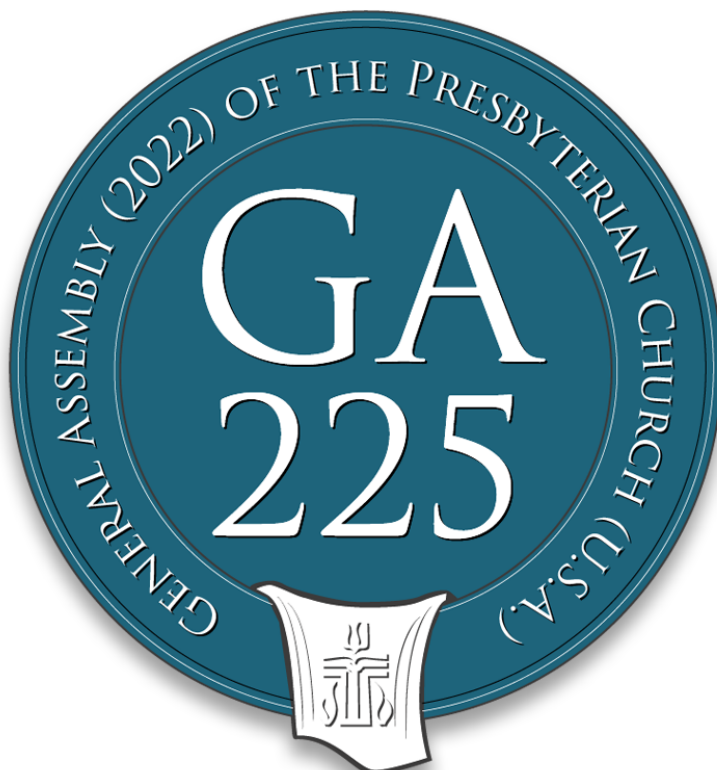
Liturgist..... Joyce Godfrey
Children's Moment..... Joyce Godfrey
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Jim Niemann

Feb. 27—Transfiguration Sunday

Liturgist..... Phil Witherspoon
Children's Moment..... Phil Witherspoon
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Sada Reed

Mar. 2—Ash Wednesday

Liturgist..... Rev. Shelly Moe
Children's Moment..... Vacant
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella and Bianca Osorio



Welcome to the 225th General Assembly *from Lament to Hope*

The 225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is less than a year away, but plans are well under way for the denomination's hybrid gathering. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is knee-deep into working on how to combine in-person committee meetings with online plenaries and how to conduct those at the Church's Louisville office. Visit <https://ga-pcusa.org/> regularly to see what's new.

June 18 - July 9, 2022

Hybrid - Committee sessions in Louisville, KY,
Plenary sessions online.

Have Questions?

Contact GA Meeting Service

Email: gameetingservice@pcusa.org

Phone: (888) 728-7228 x 2417



- 1 Paula Murray
- 8 Joe Simmons
- 10 Gregory Hamilton
- 12 Joni Jacobs
- 14 Martha Walker
Kathleen Davison
- 15 Bob Knox
- 21 Julie King
- 26 Erica Maloney
- 28 Carl Smith
- 29 Holly Herman

If you see a birthday is missing or we have the wrong date, please let the office know as soon as possible.

Stay Informed on All-Things-Presby!

PC(USA) News

Available in a daily or weekly digest format. www.pcusa.org/newsupdates

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Weekly E-focus Newsletter

News and views from our presbytery. pbygrandcanyon.org/subscribe-to-efocus.

PC(USA) Office of Public Witness

Housed across the street from the U.S. Supreme Court in what is referred to as "the God Box," the OPW is the PC (USA)'s advocacy and information center in Washington, D.C. Sign up for OPW Alerts and be an advocate! www.votervoice.net/pcusa/home. Learn

more about the OPW at:

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/washington.

Presbyterian Historical Society

Organized in 1852, the PHS is the oldest denominational archives in the U.S. and serves as the national archives for the PC (USA) and its predecessor denominations. PHS exists to collect, preserve, and share the story of the American Presbyterian and Reformed experience. www.history.pcusa.org.

The Presbyterian Outlook

An independent magazine covering all things Presbyterian — \$19.95/year, 18 issues. pres-outlook.org

Presbyterians Today

Award-winning denominational magazine published by the PC(USA). Also available in a free twice monthly e-newsletter. *Get a free 1 year subscription!*

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today



Remember prayer...

- ✘ **Homebound:** Evelyn Colby, Elaine Murray, Helen Alderson
- ✘ **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)** in the U.S.
- ✘ **Communities** bearing the weight of violence in their streets and neighborhoods
- ✘ **All affected by COVID-19**, especially those who are hospitalized and their families, and the families of those who have died.
- ✘ **Medical personnel** and first responders who continue to be on the front lines of battling COVID-19
- ✘ **Indigenous People** who are especially suffering under the weight of COVID-19 and hundreds of years of subjugation.
- ✘ **Teachers and students** as they continue online and in-person.
- ✘ **All of creation**, and for the strength to stand up for environmental conservation
- ✘ **Elected & community leaders**, that they can bring peace to our nation and world
- ✘ **Military personnel**, stateside and abroad
- ✘ **Peacemakers/Mission Workers**, particularly the Rev. Leslie Vogel and the Rev. Mark Adams, Jocabed Gallego, and all at Frontera de Cristo.
- ✘ **Our nation and world**—praying for peace
- ✘ **Immigrants**, especially those separated from families
- ✘ **UPC Officers:** elders, deacons, trustees
- ✘ Those who are **suffering and are marginalized**
- ✘ Those struggling with **mental illness**

UPC Calendar

Submit corrections, additions, or deletions to the church office at (480) 966-6267 or upc@upctempe.org.

Check online for updates or to subscribe on your computer or device:

www.upctempe.org/calendar

January 2022

Sat, Jan 1

New Years Day

Sun, Jan 2

2nd Sunday of Christmastide

- 7:00 am I-HELP departs
- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)

Mon, Jan 3

- 4:30 pm ACE Team (ZP)
- 5:30 pm Mission Month Committee (ZU)
- 7:00 pm Administration Committee (ZU)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm7)

Tues, Jan 4

Office Closed—New Years Observed

Wed, Jan 5

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Jan 6

Epiphany (End of Christmastide)

- 11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)

Fri, Jan 7

- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm7)

Sun, Jan 9

Baptism of Jesus

- 8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZP)
- 11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Jan 10

- 12:00 pm Project Connect (FH)
- 5:30 pm Mission Month Committee (ZU)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm7)

Tues, Jan 11

- 7:00 am Project Connect (FH)
- 7:00 pm Worship Committee (ZP)
- 7:00 pm Finance Committee (S, ZU)

Wed, Jan 12

- 8:00 am Project Connect (FH)
- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Jan 13

- 7:00 pm CE Committee (ZU)
- 7:00 pm MSJP Committee (ZU)

Fri, Jan 14

- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm7)

Sun, Jan 16

- 8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZP)
- 11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Jan 17

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

- 5:30 pm Mission Month Committee (ZU)
- 7:00 pm Board of Deacons (ZU)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm7)

Tue, Jan 18

- 6:30 pm CIO Committee (ZP)
- 7:00 pm Board of Trustees (ZU)

Wed, Jan 19

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 1:00 pm PW Chinle Circle (MR)
- 3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Jan 20

- 11:00 am Tempe Interfaith Fellowship (ZU)
- 11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)

Fri, Jan 21

- 7:00 pm Book Club (ZU)

- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Jan 23

- 8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZP)
- 11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Jan 24

- 5:30 pm Mission Month Meeting (ZU)
- 7:00 pm Kayenta Circle (MR)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Jan 25

- 7:00 pm Stated Session (S, ZU)

Wed, Jan 26

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Fri, Jan 28

- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Jan 30

- 8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZP)
- 11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Jan 31

- 5:30 pm Mission Month Planning Team (ZU)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

February 2022

Wed, Feb 2

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

See CALENDAR, page 16

Location/Room References:

(CH)-Choir Room (CR)-Conference Room/Office (COR/Rm7)-Community Room (FH)-Fellowship Hall (HSR)-High School Room (MSR)-Middle School Room (K)-Fellowship Hall Kitchen (L)-Lounge (MR)-Meeting Room (N) Nursery (PO)-Pastor's Office (Rm#)-Room Number Indicated (S)-Sanctuary

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CALENDAR

Continued from page 15

Thu, Feb 3

11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection
Group (ZU)
7:00 pm CE Committee (ZU)

Fri, Feb 4

8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Feb 6

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU,
YouTube)
11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZP)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Feb 7

4:30 pm ACE Team (ZP)
7:00 pm Administration Committee
(ZU)
8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Feb 8

7:00 pm Worship Committee (ZP)
7:00 pm Finance Committee (S, ZU)

Wed, Feb 9

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study
(ZU)
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team
(ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks
MU, ZU)

Thu, Feb 10

7:00 pm MSJP Committee (ZU)

Fri, Feb 11

8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Feb 13

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU,
YouTube)
11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZP)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Feb 14

8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Feb 15

6:30 pm CIO Committee (ZP)
7:00 pm Board of Trustees (ZU)

Wed, Feb 16

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study
(ZU)
3:30 pm Worship Planning Team
(ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks
MU, ZU)

Thu, Feb 17

11:00 am Tempe Interfaith Fellowship
(ZU)
11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection
Group (ZU)

Fri, Feb 18

8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Feb 20

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU,
YouTube)
11:00 am Young Group (Rm 9, ZP)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Feb 21

President's Day
7:00 pm Board of Deacons (ZU)
8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)