

JANUARY 2023

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

As we usher in another year, I recall a question a reporter asked Benjamin Franklin as he emerged from the Continental Convention that was forming the structure of America's government. "What kind of government have you given us" asked the reporter. Franklin's response was "a republic if you can keep it."



That statement was made more than two hundred years ago, and history shows that the cycle of national dominance usually expires in about that period. Where are we in the cycle?

The historical cycle seems to be: From bondage to spiritual faith; spiritual faith to courage; courage to liberty; liberty to abundance; abundance to selfishness; selfishness to apathy; apathy to dependency; dependency back to bondage once more. Knowing this, we need to find somewhere to place our faith and trust in 2023. Where can that be? Certainly not in men or nations, they will disappoint us. Certainly not in the economy, it is in shambles.

In this coming year, the only safe place to put our trust is in God. "Blessed are all who put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12). "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" (Psalm 34:8).

Put your trust in God! For where your treasure is, there you will find your heart. Put your trust in Him! He will not let you down. God is our hope, so put your life in His hands. May this be our resolution for the New Year.

God Bless,

Woody




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Find us on  we have 2 pages for you to
First Presbyterian Church
Athens, TX
& FPC Athens Youth

Be sure to check-in on Facebook
when you visit the church
campus

SESSION REPORT

December Stated Session

- Thank you to those rotating off Session in December. They are Adron Neill, Steve Grant, Mark Smith and Donna Ward. We appreciate your contributions for the past three years.
- The new class of Elders will begin their three years in January. They are: Claire Grant, Joan King, Kara Davis and Steve Yarbrough.
- The Women's Christmas get together and the Session party for Elders, new members and prospective members were a great success. Thanks to the Meredith's for hosting.
- The 2023 church budget was approved by Session.
- Look for a new Presbyterian Cross, facing Corsicana Street, in the near future.
- Communion dates were approved for 2023. We will continue to celebrate Communion on the first Sunday of each month, plus Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve.

Respectfully Submitted, Donna Ward - Clerk of Session

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Submit your items for the Communique by the 15th of every month!

Email news & photos to secretary@fpcathens.com

**Women of the Word Bible Study
Thursday Mornings @ 9:30 in Upstairs Classroom**



the women are invited to attend. For further information please contact the church office.

Women of the Word meets each Thursday morning at 9:30 in the upstairs classroom in main building. All



We would like to wish the following couple a very Happy Anniversary. We pray you are blessed with many more years together.

12th—William & Barbara Elfarr (21 years)

MEMORIALS RECEIVED FOR...

Jim Shatzsall
Todd Hopson
Jim Harris
Sue Harris



Community Prayer Box

Please continue to spread the word about the community prayer box located behind the Cain Family Building. If you have a prayer request, please do not hesitate to ask for prayers from your church family & friends. We are called to pray for one another.

Columbarium News

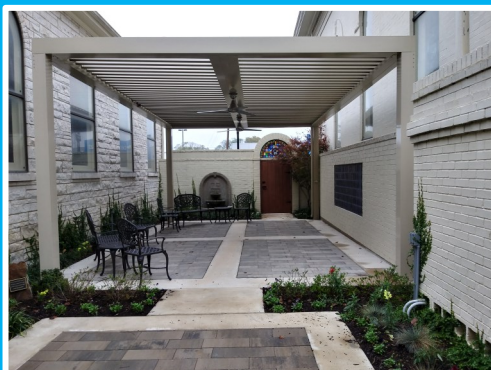
For many centuries, cemeteries were commonly found in churchyards, allowing churches to minister to the spiritual needs of their members. But there is a modern alternative which churches are offering their members: the Columbarium.

A Columbarium is a collection of niches designed to house urns inscribed with the person's names and dates of birth and death.

The principal benefit a Columbarium affords church members and their families is the opportunity to select their final resting place in the shadow of the church where their loved ones can visit and meditate at any time.

The Columbarium is part of First Presbyterian Church and functions under the authority of the Session. A Columbarium Committee oversees operation of the Columbarium.

If you wish to discuss the purchase of a niche within the Columbarium, please contact the church office.



Those In Our Church Family

Steven Yarbrough

Those Who Are In Need Of Our Visits & Prayers

At Lakeland Assisted Living:

Fred Davies

At Oak Wood Assisted Living:

Fran Jones

Susan Underkoffler

Mark Carlson

Prayers For Those Serving In The Mission Field

Kurt Esslinger & Hyeyoung Lee - PCUSA Mission co-workers

Those Who Are Grieving

The Family of Sue Harris

Those We Love Needing Prayer

Evelyn Jackson (cousin of the Lively's)

Lotus McKissick (granddaughter of Colleen Spurlock)

Kay Johnson (MIL of Monique Fisher)

Joe & Jen McSweeney (family of Sandy Perkins)

Beau Justice (friend of Susan Sparkman)

Anthony Chiles (friend of many)

Steven Helf (friend of many)

Mike Sonnier (friend of Sandy Perkins)

Cohen Fortner (friend of the Meredith's)

Charlie McSweeney (nephew of Sandy Perkins)

Those We Love In The Armed Forces

Si Robson, U.S. Army Ranger, Missouri
son of Willy & Sheri Robson, grandson of Fran Jones

Those Away at School

Chloe Wright

Elaine Hendrickson

Madison Rhodes

Collin Maddock

Hannah Davis

Tate Elfarr

Alec Elfarr

Toby Rhodes

Olivia Whatley

Will Perryman

Session

Class of 2023

Mike Babler

Margaret Breedlove

Kim Scott

Class of 2024

Scott Cruce

Kathryn Hendrickson

Rick Stroupe

Class of 2025

Kara Davis

Claire Grant

Joan King

And the prayer of faith will save the one
who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.
And if he has committed sins, he will
be forgiven.
James 5:15 (ESV)



All are welcome! Please join us; you'll be glad you did! Call the church office at 903-675-3530 with any questions.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Disciples Class

The Disciples Class makes use of "The Wired Word" or similar materials, which blends national or world events of the previous week and relevant Bible verses to guide our discussion. Periodically we step away from our regular curriculum to explore other resources, including studies of literature that can provide insight into our beliefs. Our class encourages enthusiastic discussion of important topics and current events. We meet in the conference room of the main building.

Disciples Contact Person: Lacey Ward

Rotation of Teachers: Carol McNatt, Sheri Robson, Lacey Ward & Linda Horton

Location: Conference Room in the Main Building

Time: 9:40 am Sunday morning

Friendship Class

We began a new study on Sunday, September 11, 2022, called "How to Study the Bible Through the Jesus Lens" by Michael Williams. Come join us if you want to explore more of God's Word. For more information, please contact Donna Meredith at (903) 286-2085 or donnafostermeredith@gmail.com.

Friendship Leader: Mike Babler

Location: Main Church Building, Friendship Classroom

Time: 9:45 am Sunday morning

Seekers Class

We began a new study on Sunday, September 25, 2022, title "Approaching God: How to Pray" by Steve Brown. This is the second book in his series. We would like to invite you to join in us during our time of study and fellowship. The class meets upstairs in the main church building.

Seekers Contact Person: Will Davies

Location: Main Church Building, Upstairs east side; Seekers Classroom

Time: 9:45 am Sunday morning

Sunday Nursery Remains the Same for All Children in the Children's Building

In order to accommodate our younger families and visitors with infants and toddlers, we will continue to staff the Children's Building with two workers for children, infants to 5th grade. Nursery workers are available during both worship services, as well as during the Sunday School hour.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Meet in the Children's Building
every Sunday 9:45-10:30**

- **Ages 3 and up - Teacher:** Kathryn Hendrickson and Susan Sparkman with rotating assistants/substitutes.

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

All Youth ages **6th - 12th grades** meet for Sunday morning classes in the Youth House located by the Main Parking lot.

Middle School & High School

Teachers: Ken Lemmon; Claire Grant;
Cathie Scarborough
Substitutes: Jim & Karen Brack

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



MEN FOR HIM

It was such a joy to sing at our Friends and Family night at FPC on December 13. We will be singing again at FPC sometime in February. Upcoming events include singing at First Methodist Church in Malakoff on January 29.

We did not have practice December 20 or December 27 because of the holidays. We start again on Tuesday, January 3rd, and we will continue to practice weekly on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 in the Fellowship Hall at First Presbyterian Church. The chorus sings four-part barbershop style religious music and is made up of men from area churches.

If God has gifted you with a singing voice, you may want to consider using that gift with the chorus. We invite and encourage you to visit a practice and check us out. We have fun, create lasting friendships with men from other churches and share our witness through music. If you would like more information, please feel free to call me at 214-478-2386.

Ted Schroeder, Director
Men for Him

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL



PW - Presbyterian Women
 CFB - Cain Family Building
 FH - Fellowship Hall
 FHC - Fellowship Hall
 Classroom
 CB - Children's Building
 YH - Youth House
 CR - Conference Room
 FC - Friendship Classroom

JANUARY 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion 11:00 am—Worship Service (Sanctuary)	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3 5:30 pm—Missions/Community Concerns Committee Meeting 6:30 pm—Men for Him (FH)	4 5:30 pm—Christian Ed. Committee Mtg. (FC) 6:00 pm—Sally's Soup Ministry Meeting (FHC)	5 9:30 am—Women of the Word Bible Study 6:00 pm—MOPS (FH)	6 Epiphany of the LORD	7 9:00 am—Rebecca Project (FH)
8 8:30 am—Worship Service (FH) 9:45 am—Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship Service (Sanctuary)* 4:00pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)	9 9:00 am—AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	10 6:30 pm—Men for Him (FH)	11 6:15 pm—Session Meeting (FHC)	12 9:30 am—Women of the Word Bible Study	13	14 9:00 am—Rebecca Project (FH)
15 8:30 am—Worship Service (FH) 9:45 am—Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship Service (Sanctuary)	16 9:00 am—AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	17 6:30 pm—Men for Him (FH)	18 5:00 pm—Bells (FHC)	19 9:30 am—Women of the Word Bible Study 6:00 pm—MOPS (FH)	20	21 9:00 am—Rebecca Project (FH)
22 8:30 am—Worship Service (FH) 9:45 am—Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship Service (Sanctuary) 4:00pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)	23 9:00 am—AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	24 6:30 pm—Men for Him (FH)	25 5:00 pm—Bells (FHC)	26 9:30 am—Women of the Word Bible Study 10:00 am—CASA (FH)	27 Love In Action	28 9:00 am—Rebecca Project (FH)
29 8:30 am—Worship Service (FH) 9:45 am—Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship Service (Sanctuary) 4:00pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)	30 9:00 am—AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	31 6:30 pm—Men for Him (FH)				

* Installation/Ordination of incoming Session members will be during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Please come help us welcome the Class of 2025 Session Members.

JANUARY 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Charles Tidmore	2	3	4	5 Marsha Stroupe	6	7 Bill Breedlove Marcy Warren
8	9	10	11	12 Raleigh Cates	13 Nick Grant	14 Randall Kimes
15 Stacey Arnold-Peil	16 Skylar Fain	17 Mark Smith	18	19 Hank Skelton Elliott Boyles	20 Ken Ferris	21
22 Derek Davies	23	24 Charlie Meadows	25	26 Erin Harrison Kyle Johnson	27	28 Shelby Endsley
29 Woody Meredith	30 John Miller II Karen Brack	31 Barbara Elfarr				

BIRTHDAYS

CHURCH MINISTRIES

HC Food Pantry

The Food Pantry continues to fill the gap for those in our community that needs it. CHECK OUT THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MAIN BUILDING FOR SPECIFIC ITEMS THAT THEY NEED. You can bring them and drop them off in the box under the "NEWS" bulletin board in the main building and they will get where they are needed most.

They are open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and always need volunteers to work.

Questions? Contact Mamie Downing at 903-477-3010 or the church office for more information.

821 Ministries/Rebecca Project

Meets each Saturday morning at 9:00 am, in the Fellowship Hall where the volunteers prepare and then deliver home-cooked meals to the elderly, shut-ins and homeless.

Delivery drivers, and others, are needed weekly. Will you pray about volunteering? We would love to have you with us.

Questions? You can find out more about this on their Facebook page or by contacting the church office.



Love in Action

Eric & Kara Davis will be preparing the monthly meal from FPC-Athens on **Friday, January 27, 2023**. Please be watching for the email listing the needed items that will be sent on January 16, 2023.

Questions? Contact Eric Davis at ericbdavis35@gmail.com



Sally Soup Ministry

Join us on Wednesday, January 4, 2023 at 6:00 pm, for our next meeting. These meetings rarely last more than 30 minutes, and it is always a good time to have fellowship and share any concerns about members of our precious flock.

If you haven't had the privilege of joining us in the past, please pray about joining us now, as we get back to the work of this ministry.

Questions?

Please contact Claire Grant at clairewgrant@aol.com or Steve Sparkman at srsparkman@yahoo.com, if you would like more information about this ministry or how you can volunteer.

Soup Kitchen

** VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Contact Sharon Chasey if you can help or for more information 903-292-1639, 903-477-7498 or email skchasey@aol.com.

We are currently only serving 50-100 people on the last Tuesday and the following Thursday of each month, providing "take-out" service of soup, sandwich & dessert. Serving time is from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m..



COMMUNITY LIFE SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

CHRISTMAS BENEVOLENCE PROGRAM



In October 2022, we sent sixteen letters to local elementary schools asking for their help in identifying families that needed a little extra help during Christmas. They were each asked to send the names of three separate families. We received the names of 38 families, which we then contacted and either shopped for them or the volunteers met the family at Wal-Mart and shopped with them.

This year, we were able to provide Christmas presents for 125 children. Along with the gifts, each family was given a Spark Story Bible and a \$100 Brookshire gift card.

In addition to this,

- we were able to provide some needed items to 4 nursing home residents, that were packaged and then delivered;
- we provided 15 brand new pairs of shoes and 20 pairs of socks, to Love in Action for their annual Shoe Drive, where they provide new shoes to the local homeless population.

Thank you to the 27 volunteers that helped to shop for these families, along with the 4 volunteers for the nursing home residents and Love in Action. This would have not been possible without your help and dedication. The time that the volunteers put in, was approximately 130 hours. Plus there was 1 volunteer at Wal-Mart each day that shopping was done, who managed the checkout process.

We also provided 2 sets of gift cards (\$100 Wal-Mart and \$100 Brookshire) to Traci and Gerardo this Christmas.

Thank you to the Cain Foundation for joining with us to help make this annual program such a success.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ “ Matthew 25:34-40 (ESV)

AGAPE QUILTS

On December 20th, we finished the year delivering another dozen sleeping bags to the Soup Kitchen. As the need in our community has continued to grow, we've been able to keep up furnishing warm bags as needed.

The holidays are over, it's a new year and the "team" is ready to get back to work. We are looking forward to another successful year for AGAPE Quilts. Happy New Year!

With "Sew" Much Love,

*Sofia
& the team*



MOPS Group (Mothers of Preschoolers)

MOPS meets the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of each month at 6 p.m. Childcare available. Open to ALL moms ~ For more info: Contact Melanie Endsley (903-804-6444). Find us on Facebook: *MOPS of Athens*



MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) meets twice per month at FPC Athens and provides free childcare and meals to community mothers and their children. The group supports local families and welcomes new members!

***FOR CHURCH
MEMBERS***

Would you be interested in providing a meal for our MOPS families? If so, contact Alashia Walls at (903) 676-7528.



2022 CHRISTMAS PARADE PREPARATIONS



PC RINGERS

Here are some of the Peg Cain Ringers, polishing the bells for their Christmas performance.



2022 CHRISTMAS CAROLING

There was a group of people that went Christmas caroling at local long-term care facilities. Great fun was had by all!

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Located at: 405 East Corsicana Street

SEND MAIL TO: P.O. Box 927

Athens, TX 75751

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
BULK MAIL
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ATHENS, TEXAS 75751
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JANUARY '23 COMMUNIQUE

NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ONLINE OR VIA EMAIL!

- * Go to www.fpcathens.com and click the tab "Church Communique".
- Fill out the form on the bottom of the page, choosing either electronic or printed copy.

Join Us On Sundays
Worship at 8:30 a.m.
in the Fellowship Hall
Sunday School at 9:45 a.m.
see newsletter for locations
Worship at 11:00 a.m.
in the Sanctuary
Child Care
Main Bldg & Children's Bldg.
(For both services &
Sunday School)

Pastor

Rev. Woody Meredith
woody@fpcathens.com

Director of Music

Janis Capelle

Organist & Bell Choir Leader

Mamie Downing

Business Manager

Marshall Endsley
marshall@fpcathens.com

Office Administrator

(Facebook/Messenger/Newsletter Editor/Webmaster)

Traci Dechaume
secretary@fpcathens.com

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Next Deadline:

January 15th

Email announcements, articles,
information, etc. to
secretary@fpcathens.com

We Are

*A family of Disciples,
touched by God's grace,
called to share Christ
through Worship,
Ministry & Outreach*