



Member of PC-USA

The Communique: *December 2025*

A publication of First Presbyterian Church-Athens, TX



We are a warm, caring, nurturing, and supportive Church family of deeply committed disciples who are excited about sharing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world through numerous avenues of ministry.

We are rich in history, having been founded in 1855, but we continue to be actively seeking God's will in the 21st Century. We continue to rely on God's Spirit as we strive to serve God's people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. We would love to have you be a part of this loving and joy-filled family of God.

If you are searching for answers to life's pressing questions, you are welcome here. If you are looking to be a part of a spirit-filled worship experience that can fill you with God's love and power, you are welcome here. If you are seeking a Church home where your individual talents can be shared, you are welcome here.

Please accept my personal invitation to come and experience the love, joy and peace of God that's found at First Presbyterian Church of Athens.

Our doors and hearts are open to you. Welcome! Rev. Woody Meredith

"The Communique"

is a monthly newsletter publication distributed electronically in pdf format to subscribers.

If you are interested in receiving a digital copy, please visit our "About" section of our website at www.fpcathens.com and select the heading "Communique Newsletter".

Simply fill out the form provided and submit.

***Items being submitted for the Communique are due by the 21st of every month to secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com**

◇ PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

◇ CHURCH REPORTS: NOVEMBER 2025

◇ MINISTRY ACTIVITIES & NEEDS

◇ SPECIAL OFFERING: CHRISTMAS JOY

◇ DECEMBER 2025 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

◇ 12/14 LESSONS & CAROLS CHRISTMAS SERVICE-6:00PM

◇ 12/24 CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE-6:00PM



Pastor's Ponderings:

Here's something I bet you've never heard of: "Jerry and David's Guide to the World Wide Web." It was a website put up in January 1994, by two Stanford University graduate students, Jerry Yang and David Filo. It was a directory of other websites – a way for users to discover the relatively small number of websites that existed in the early nineties. In April of 1994, the name was changed to Yahoo!, and in January 1995, the yahoo.com address was registered – and the era of seeking and finding on the Internet was born.

Yahoo!, as the main way to seek and find what's on the Internet, was eventually supplanted by Google as the leader in the digital search space. Today, finding information, people, news, and products couldn't be easier. Most Google searches are accomplished in less than a second. Searching, it seems like that's all we're doing these days – searching. The Magi searched for a new King of Israel with no certainty of finding Him. In God's plan, their search led them to a stable, in an obscure town. We enjoy the Christmas magic of knowing who Jesus is, where He is, and how we may know Him better.

Are you seeking Him this Christmas: in the Scriptures, in your daily journey, in sharing Him with others, in living a sacrificial life, and serving Him with true worship? Those are the ways Christmas reminds us to seek and find Him. And what about gifts? What gifts do you bring to Him this Christmas? Let your gifts be those of love, forgiveness, joy, worship, celebration, and a sacrificial life. We have found the Savior the Magi sought. Let us celebrate Him!

From the Meredith family to yours, Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year.



Pastor Woody



Mission Statement:

A family of disciples touched by God's grace, called to share Christ through worship, ministry, and outreach.

We strive to live out our Mission Statement by providing worship and Christian Education experiences that allow for personal spiritual growth. As equipped disciples we then go into the world to model Christ's love to others.



Would you like to have the opportunity to become a part of FPC-Athens worship experience?

Contact the church office about Liturgist and Greeter opportunities.

Church Library:

Do you need a new book to lose yourself in or maybe revisit one you haven't read in a long while? Then, we want to invite you to visit the church library and take one home.

The library is open Monday-Friday from 8:00am to 2:00pm and on Sunday from 8:30am to Noon.

Easy book check-out instructions are posted. We welcome suggestions for new books, videos or CD's to order, and book donations in honor or in memory of someone special.

For questions or help, contact Kim Scott (kscott7938@aol.com).

The library is located in the church office area, past the front desk, 2nd door on the right.



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.

Sherry Smith Prayer Garden:



Our church prayer garden (shared in the same space as the columbarium) is a peaceful sanctuary surrounded by blooming flowers and shaded trees.

Whether seeking comfort, expressing gratitude, or simply enjoying the scenery, visitors & members alike feel embraced by the presence of God.

It is a cherished corner of the church, reminding all who enter of the beauty of faith and the power of prayer.

Contact the church office if you are interested in lending a hand in maintaining the prayer garden.

PRAYER LIST



Congregation Members
Who Need Our Prayers

Burt Lively, Jan Capelle,
Sue Murray, Sharron Clark,
Adron Neill, Melanie Endsley,
Elliott Boyles



Those Who Are in Need of
Our Visits & Prayers

Lakeland Assisted Living:
Fred Davies
Oak Wood Place Assisted Living:
Susan Underkofler, Mark Carlson
Arabella of Athens:
Dolores Herrington
Mary Lynn Smith



Those Who Are Grieving

Family of Phyllis Lassiter
(SIL of Eddie Lassiter)
Family of Rey Hudson
(brother of Lee Hudson)
Family of Art Hall
Family of Eleanor Landrum
(Beth Youngblood's mother)



Those We Love in the Armed Forces

Si Robson,
U.S. Army Ranger, Fort Campbell, KY
Adam King (grandson of Joan King)
Army, Fort Bragg, NC



Prayers For Our Church & Country

Our church and its leaders.
Our community and its leaders.
Our nation, and its leaders
and the nation of Israel.



Prayers For Those Serving
In The Mission Field

Kurt Esslinger and Hyeyoung Lee
Missionaries in Korea



Those Away at School

Madison Rhodes, Heidi Davis, Tate Elfarr, Sophie Wright



Those We Love Needing Prayer

DeeDee Manton (friend of Sandy Perkins)
Jennifer McSweeney (niece of Sandy Perkins)
Paul Rutherford (friend of Sandy Perkins)
Kay Ruiz (friend of Eric & Kara Davis)
Sue Dover (Melanie Whatley's Mother)
Paige Reeves (friend of many)
Grady Chancellor (friend of many)
Eugene Buford (family member of Morrison's &
Cole's, friend of many)
Mike Pulley (friend of many)
Kathy Moser, Dylan Thoor
(friends of The Neill's)

Pam Tischler (friend of Kenn & Shirley Hornbeck)
Dustin DuBose (relative to Nikki DuBose)
Janice Russell (friend of The Grant's)
Cheryl Hartman (cousin of Paul & Diana Hartman).
Randy Daniel (friend of many)
Rob & Shereia Fulton (friends of The Meredith's)
Laura King (SIL of Lou Sutton)
Brenda (Johnson) Smith (friend of many)
Jill Shockley (former Office Manager at FPC Athens)

Session Members and Where They Serve

Building and Grounds: Charlie Tidmore
Christian Education: Angela St. Valentine
Community Concerns/Missions/Witness:
Kara Davis/Claire Grant/Nancy Perryman
Congregational Life: Melanie Whatley/Marcy Warren

Personnel: John Youngblood/Steve Yarbrough
Stewardship: Steven Smith
Worship: John Purser
Clerk of Session: Donna Ward

CHILDREN'S *Sunday School*

FPC-Athens Christian Education Committee offers educational activities that occur on Sunday mornings to encourage growth & leadership as disciples of Jesus Christ. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Angela St. Valentine at 817-271-2211.

BABY & TODDLER

The nursery is open in the main church building. Note: Sunday Nursery remains the same for Older Children in the Children's Building.

In order to accommodate our younger families and visitors with infants and toddlers, the crib and toddler rooms in the main church building are open and staffed with two workers.

Nursery workers are available during both worship services & during Sunday School.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Located in the Children's Building for ages 3 and up.
Staffed with at least two workers.**

Teachers: Kathryn Hendrickson, Susan Sparkman, and Phyllis Kidwell.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

We meet in the Youth House located in the main church parking lot at 9:45am.

Our Teachers (Rotating Schedule):

Steve & Claire Grant

Angela St. Valentine & Alex Fernandez

Eric & Kara Davis

Pam Douglas & Tyler Hendrickson

Adult

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

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

DISCIPLES CLASS: 9:45AM

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.

Come join us! Our class encourages enthusiastic discussion and is led by three different teachers.

Disciples Contact Person: Lacey Ward

Rotation of Teachers: Sheri Robson, Lacey Ward, Lou Sutton, & Christy Purser

Location: Main Building-Conference Room .

FRIENDSHIP CLASS: 9:45AM

The **Friendship Class** is currently discussing "The Rapture: Fact or Fantasy" by Dr. Robert Jeffress.

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.

SEEKERS CLASS: 9:45AM

The **Seekers Class** is currently studying the Book of Titus.

We would like to invite you to join us during our time of study and fellowship.

Seekers Contact Person: Steve Grant.

Location: Main Church Building-Upstairs East Side.

Spotlight

DECEMBER 2025

Each month, FPC-Athens highlights a mission, ministry, or community outlet in our Communique newsletter.

Past and present editions can be found on our website at www.fpcathens.com

CHRISTMAS BENEVOLENCE PROJECT

- PROVIDES LOW-INCOME FAMILIES FROM LOCAL SCHOOLS WITH CHRISTMAS GIFTS.
 - PROVIDES EACH FAMILY WITH STORY BIBLE.
- PROVIDES EACH FAMILY WITH A BROOKSHIRE'S GIFT CARD.



Volunteer packets are now available for pick up in the church office for those who have signed up to shop. We are still seeking additional volunteers for the Nursing Home recipients. Please contact Terri Budow 210-204-0375 if you are interested.

Here we are quickly approaching the Christmas Season and with that comes the Christmas Benevolence Project. Many of you are already aware of how this project affects our community, but for those who are not familiar, here is a brief summary.



Each year letters are sent to local elementary schools, requesting names of families that are in need of a "little extra help" at Christmas. Volunteers then contact the family they are assigned to and set up a time to go shopping with them. This is when the real blessings begin, because we have the opportunity to not only meet "Christmas Wishes" but also have the opportunity to engage with the parents of these children and pray with them and for them all year long.

Please, prayerfully consider volunteering this year. We would love for you to be included and to witness the many blessings that are received.

LOCAL MISSION PARTNERS & FPCA MINISTRIES

Join us in ministering not only to our own community, but to the world. The members of FPCA desire to carry out the mission of our LORD, Jesus Christ and to engage the members of our congregation in service to our community, so that they may grow in Christ. In addition to our volunteer work, we also provide financial support to the following ministries and missions.

For more information about the list below, visit our website or call the church office.



Local Mission Partners

- The Ark—Prepare meals for TVCC students.
- Athens Soup Kitchen
- Camp Gilmont
- CASA of Trinity Valley
- The Disciples Clinic
- Family Peace Project
- The Farm (Family Shelter)
- Fuel Fund via HC Help Center
- Henderson County Food Pantry
- Henderson County Young Life
- Labor of Love
- Lila Lane Outreach
- Love in Action (Monthly Meals-4th Friday)
- Meals on Wheels (North Texas)
- Presbyterian Children's Home & Services
- Rainbow Room
- Rebecca Project
- Skiin' with the Galilean Ministry

Other Opportunities within the Church

- Agape Quilt & Bedroll Ministry
- Chancel Choir
- Christmas Benevolence Program
- Hand Bell Choir
- Ladies Bible Study
- Men's Chorus "Men for Him"
- Monthly Family Night Supper
- Mother's Day Out
- PC USA Special Offerings
- Presbyterian Women's Fellowship
- Sally's Soup Ministry
- Vacation Bible School



HENDERSON COUNTY
HOMELESS MINISTRY

Please note that our December Love In Action Meal and all of its ingredients will be provided by our Missions and Community Concerns Committee.

Thank you to all who have contributed throughout this year.



AGAPE Quilts:

If you have or know someone who might have heavier types of fabric & material to donate (quilts, bedspreads, blankets, & fleece throws),

Please contact Sharon Harding at 903-681-4649 or shar7@suddenlink.net

PREPARE THE WAY

ISAIAH 40



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 21



Collection Date: December 21st

THE PERFECT GIFT.

Special Offering News: Christmas Joy

OUR GIFTS AT WORK: SUPPORTING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE LEADERS

The Christmas Joy Offering honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. Thanks in part to support from this Offering, church workers can receive critical financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances. These generous actions bear witness to our faithful response to God's charge to love one another as Christ commanded.

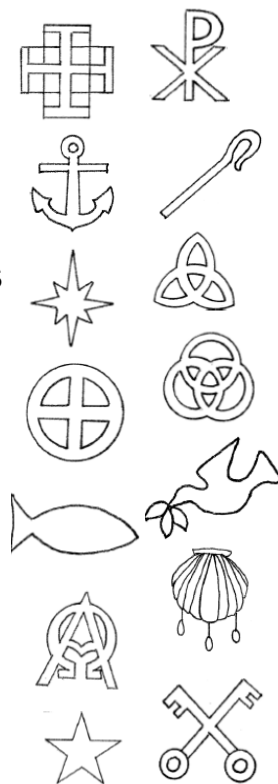
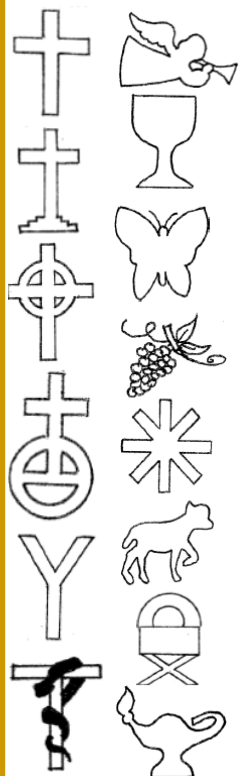
- \$1.1 million of gifts from the 2024 Offering are being used to provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their times of need.
- Income supplements from the BOP helped nearly 261 individual recipients, assisting retired church workers and surviving spouses with the means to provide for themselves.
- Housing supplements from the BOP helped more than 1,366 individual recipients remain in their homes, afford assisted living, or long-term care.
- Emergency Assistance Grants from the BOP helped more than 199 individual recipients facing times of great financial need or uncertainty due to unforeseen circumstances.

What is a Chrismon?

Chrismons originated at Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia in 1957 and have been adapted by churches of many denominations to be used at Christmas to remind us of God's Son Jesus Christ.

The word *Chrismon* is derived from "Christ Monogram."

Chrismons are religious symbols representing many aspects of the Christian faith. Chrismons are traditionally white (the liturgical color of Christmas and Easter that signifies joy and holiness) and gold (representing the glory, majesty and kingship of Jesus.)






.In Honor & In Memory of.

Poinsettias

Limited Amount = 20 plants
 Size: 6" in Red.
 Cost \$10.00 each.
 Note: Please make checks out to FPC Athens. Memo Line: Poinsettia

Deadline to Sign-Up: 12/14/2025
 Call or visit the Church Office.
 Thank you!





Holiday Closure Dates

In observance of Christmas and New Year's, the church office will be closed on the following dates.

Worship Service Dates are also provided.

- Closed: Wednesday, December 24th-Saturday, December 27th.
- Wednesday, December 24th:
Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 6pm in our Sanctuary.
- Sunday, December 28th:
10am Combined Worship Service in our Sanctuary followed by a luncheon in the Fellowship Hall.
- Closed: New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1st, 2026 & Friday, January 2nd, 2026

Save The Date

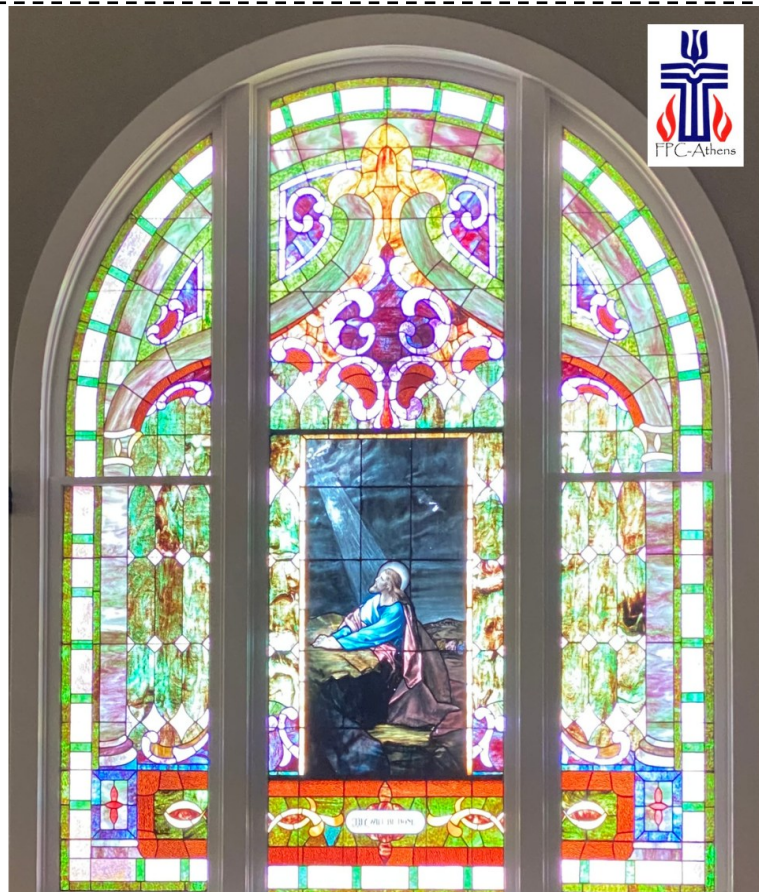
DISCOVER HOPE, FAITH, & COMMUNITY.

JOIN US ON DECEMBER 28TH:
 FOR A COMBINED SERVICE AT
 10:00AM IN THE SANCTUARY.
 NO SUNDAY SCHOOL.

**LUNCH TO IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW IN
 THE FELLOWSHIP HALL.**

MORE INFORMATION TO COME!

First Presbyterian Church-Athens
 405 E. Corsicana Street, Athens, TX 75751
 903-675-3530
www.fpcathens.com



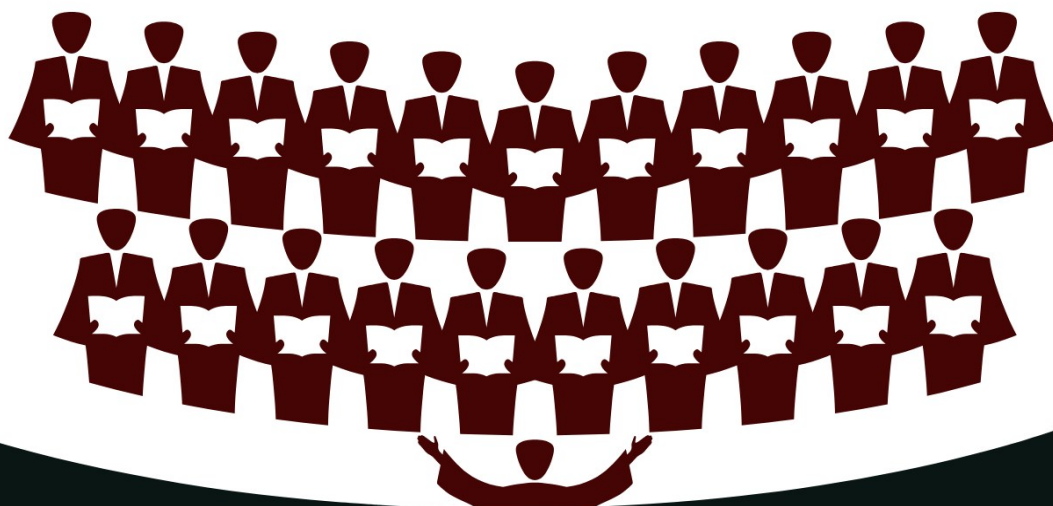


LESSONS & *Carols*

CHRISTMAS SERVICE

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025 FREE ADMISSION
DOORS OPEN AT 5:45PM-SERVICE BEGINS AT 6:00PM
LOCATED IN THE CHURCH SANCTUARY**

A RECEPTION WILL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL.



*Celebrate the true spirit of Christmas with
beautiful music, timeless hymns, and community
togetherness as we welcome the birth of Christ.*



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ATHENS
405 E. CORSICANA STREET
ATHENS, TX 75751
903-675-3530**



You're Invited to attend our

Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service

6PM on Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Located in our Sanctuary.
Communion will be served.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH-ATHENS

405 E. CORSICANA STREET ATHENS, TX 75751

903-675-3530 WWW.FPCATHENS.COM SECRETARYFPCATHENS@GMAIL.COM



FPC-Athens Activities Calendar

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	2 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	3 5:00PM Bell Choir Rehearsal (FHCR) 5:30pm Christian ED Cmte Mtg (FC)	4 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC)	5 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	6
7 Second Sunday of Advent Communion Sunday Color: Purple or Blue 8:30am Worship Service (FH) 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30pm Chancel Choir	8 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB) 12:00pm Book Club (Joan King-CR)	9 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	10 5:00PM Bell Choir Rehearsal (FHCR) 6:15pm Session Mtg (FHC)	11 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC) 6:00pm Lessons & Carols Dress Rehearsal	12 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	13
14 Third Sunday of Advent Color: Purple or Blue 8:30am Worship Service (FH) 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30pm Chancel Choir  5:00-5:45pm Dress Rehearsal Doors Open at 5:45pm 6:00pm Lessons & Carols Christmas Service (Sanc.)	15 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	16 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	17	18 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC)	19 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	20
21 Fourth Sunday of Advent Color: Purple or Blue Special Offering Christmas Joy Collection 8:30am Worship Service (FH) 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30pm Chancel Choir	22 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	23	24 Christmas Eve  Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (Communion) 6:pm Sanctuary	25 Christmas Day 	26  11:00am Meal served @ LIA Homeless Ministry	27
28 First Sunday of Christmas Color: White and Gold 10:00am Worship Service (Sanctuary) 11:00am Lunch (FH) 1:30pm Chancel Choir	29 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	30	31 	1 New Year's Day	2	
Church Office Closed!				Church Office Closed!		

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



FPC-Athens Birthday Calendar

December

Happy
Birthday

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Jo Ann Johnson	2	3	4 Rev. Diana Hartman Jolene Taylor John Youngblood	5 Fred Davies	6
7	8	9 Andrea Copeland	10 Judy Locke	11 Dan Morrison	12	13 Alexis Lassiter
14	15 Sam Hurley Leslie Jones Adron Neill	16	17 McKenna Jones	18 Gary Espy	19 Jim Bickle Sr.	20 Spencer Skelton
21	22	23	24 Emilli Morrison Susan Underkofler	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



FPC-Athens Anniversary Calendar

December

Happy
Anniversary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 Will & B.J. Davies	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 Ronnie & Cindy Babcock	20
21	22	23 Hank & Janet Skelton	24	25	26	27
28 Elliott & Ann Boyles	29	30	31 Bill & Janie Poncik			



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Located at: 405 East Corsicana Street

SEND MAIL TO:
P.O. Box 927
Athens, TX 75751

DECEMBER 2025 COMMUNIQUE

We invite you & your family to join us for worship on Sunday mornings:

Contemporary Worship

8:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

Sunday School at 9:45am

Traditional Worship

11:00am in the Sanctuary

5th Sunday Worship

10:00am in the Sanctuary

Child Care: Children's Building
(For both services & Sunday School)

*Communion is served the
1st Sunday of each month.*

**(see inside this newsletter for
more information)**

Pastor

Rev. Woody Meredith
woody@fpcathens.com

Director of Music

Janis Capelle

Organist & Bell Choir Leader

Mamie Downing

Music Leader

Kara Davis

Business Manager

Marshall Endsley
marshall@fpcathens.com

Office Manager

Kelly Sassenbery
secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com
(Facebook/Messenger/Newsletter Editor/Webmaster)

Connect With Us

Office Phone: 903-675-3530
Website: www.fpcathens.com
Email: secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com

First Presbyterian Church-Athens, TX

FOLLOW US ON *social media*

Find us on Facebook, YouTube, & Instagram.
Use your cell phone camera to scan the QR Codes.



FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE.