

# First Presbyterian Church of Hanford

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## FIRST PRESS

December 2023

### "Slow Me Down Lord"



After many weeks of rehearsals and costume-making, the church's second-grade Sunday school class finally came to the big night of putting on the annual Christmas pageant. Excitement was in the air as every child had a special part to play. Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the angels, and many farm animals were there. But, to create the desired dramatic effect, it had been decided that the role of the Christ child would be played not by a person but by an electric light bulb hidden in the manger.

The idea was that, at the right time, all the stage lights would be turned off so that only the brightness of the light in the manger could be seen. At least, that was the intent. But, when the lights went out, the boy who controlled the light panel got confused, and he turned out all the lights -- including the light bulb in the manger. It was a tense few moments until one of the shepherds said in a loud stage whisper to the boy who controlled the lights, "Hey! Billy, you switched off Jesus! Turn him on again, will ya, so we can have Christmas?"

Children can be very insightful, can't they? What could be a more urgent request that we all need to hear at this time of year than the one spoken by that little boy: "Turn Jesus on again, will ya, so we can have Christmas." Often, we miss the true glory of Christmas because Christ gets turned off in our lives by all that goes on, and we get distracted and miss the glory and anticipation of Christmas. May this year be different.

Advent means the anticipated arrival of royalty or someone important. For Christians, Advent is the four Sundays leading up to Christmas day. It is a time of preparation and celebration. It is a season of giving and receiving. It is a season of renewal and hope. The following prayer is one that I like to recite during the season of Advent. You can make it your prayer as well.

Blessings,

Pastor Tim

### "Slow Me Down, Lord"

By Wilfred Arlan Peterson

*Slow me down, Lord. Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind. Steady my hurried pace with the vision of the eternal reach of time. Give me amidst the confusion of my days the calmness of the everlasting hills. Break the tension of my nerves with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory. Help me to know the restoring power of sleep. Teach me the art of taking minute vacations of slowing down, to look at a flower, pat a stray dog, to chat with an old friend or make a new one, to watch a spider build a web or smile at a child or to read a few lines from a good book. Remind me each day that the race is not always to the swift. And that there's more to life than increasing its speed. Let me look upwards through the branches of a towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well. Slow me down, Lord.*



## A Season of Thanksgiving and Celebration

The FPC Session and I want to thank you for your commitment to the Kingdom of God and our church. Your generosity is being demonstrated in various ways. Many of you are giving of your time and talents, and it is making a massive difference in the lives of others. Also, many of you have accepted the challenge of being obedient to the word of God by financially supporting the ministries of FPC and expanding the influence of the gospel locally and globally. And we have reason to celebrate. Here are some incredible statistics:

1. Financial contributions to FPC are \$24,000 ahead of last year.
2. Since June 2023, our giving has increased by \$9,000 per month.
3. FPC giving has increased 9% over 2022.
4. The last year an increase in giving was recorded was in 2019.
5. FPC did not have to dip into reserves to absorb the salary for a full-time Senior Pastor.

Thank you for your faithfulness, and I encourage you to continue to give in obedience. It will be incredible to watch what God will do through and for us as we walk according to His will. Don't forget to ensure that any financial contributions you would like credited towards your 2023 giving will need to be made before midnight on December 31, 2023.

~ Pastor Tim Brown



## THANK YOU FPC Church Family!!!

Your Missions Ministry Team thanks all of you for your prayers, your generosity, your caring, your time, and your talents!!!

Because of you, we delivered to our local collection site (FBC), 151 Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes filled with clothing, school supplies, art supplies, cleanliness items, WOW items (68 pairs of "The Shoe that Grows", soccer balls/air pumps, sewing kits, games/puzzles, dolls, cars, trucks, stuffies), and lots of love. It is through this project that children all over the world learn about our Lord and Savior and his love for them.

In Christ,

FPC Missions Ministry Team





## A Note From:

***Children's and Youth Director***

***Sheri Winterowd***

We have just enjoyed Thanksgiving which is a special time to focus so many things for which we are grateful. I personally want to express to you, my church family, how much I appreciate each of you. It is a blessing to 'do life' together and to worship, learn, grown and serve together. I feel so very thankful for the friendships and vision we share in expressing the great love of God to our community.

Recently, I read an article about the importance of the first five minutes of our day. The research suggests that how we spend that small window of time can make a big impact on the rest of the day. As a result, I have become more intentional with how I start my day.

Where I would previously grab my phone and check my messages, emails and even scroll on social media, I have now chosen to wait to pick up my phone and instead start the morning with a prayer of gratitude, and an invitation to the Holy Spirit to guide and direct my day so I can bring glory to God. "A research study suggested listing three things you are grateful for every morning — from the people in your life to the weather and your favorite breakfast — can have the same effect on you neurologically as taking an antidepressant." (source: AARP Staying Sharp, The First Five Minutes of Your Day— July 22, 2022).

Many people use a gratitude journal to record three things per day...I have done that in the past then forgot about it. I will be starting it back up now! Please join me in being intentional about starting our days off with the right attitude and seeking our Heavenly Father's will for his purpose for our days!

We have some great opportunities this month for our children and youth to enjoy fellowship and service. I hope your students can participate!

### Upcoming events:

**Saturday, Dec 2 from 4:00 – 7:00 pm** – FPC Kids Outdoor Movie Night at The Christoph Home. We will enjoy a pizza dinner, decorate cookies and watch a Christmas movie outdoors with popcorn. Bring a sleeping bag and pillows and \$5 for pizza. RSVP to Sheri

**Saturday, Dec 2** – FPC Youth Outdoor Movie Night – Youth are needed to help with the Children's Christmas Party and then stay after for a youth outdoor Christmas movie and pizza, cookies and popcorn. The youth party will be after the children' party ends. Bring a sleeping bag and pillows and \$5 for pizza. RSVP to Sheri

**Saturday, December 9, 9am -Noon** – Kids and Youth are invited to serve our community by helping with yard work at former member, Naomi Tagawa's home, which is party of the Historic China Alley Preservation Society. We will work from 9:00 am to Noon.

**Saturday, December 9 – 5:00** pm The Nutcracker Ballet Performance at the Hanford Fox Theater. Two of our own students are performing in the ballet – Kaitlyn Pelton and Charlotte Davis. Come join the fun and enjoy this Christmas tradition!

**Sunday, Dec. 10 - 5:00 - 8:00** pm Youth Group Christmas Party at church from Bring a new, wrapped gift for the gift exchange - value \$10-15. We will play Christmas themed games, have dinner and a Bible study related to Christmas.

**Sunday, Dec. 17** - Opportunity to Serve - We will help with the Armona Refuge House ministry's Christmas Party. Set up is 12-2, Actual event is from 3-5 p.m. and then after the event, there is a need for help with clean up. There will be tables to help kids choose toys, family photos, help kids pick out a winter coat, and bike giveaway; so there's a lot of ways we can help. This event is held in Armona at the Refuge House. Please RSVP to Sheri.

# UP COMING



- Dec 2** Kids & Youth Movie Night
- Dec 3** *Communion Sunday, First Sunday of Advent*, Congregational Meeting after worship service
- Dec 4** Church Growth mtg @ 1pm
- Dec 5** Deacons mtg @ 6:30pm
- Dec 6** Choir Practice @ 6:30pm, Praise Team Practice @ 7:30pm
- Dec 7** \*Bible Study @ 7pm
- Dec 10** *Second Sunday of Advent*, Youth Group @ 5pm
- Dec 11** Finance mtg @ 10am, \*Missions mtg @ 7pm
- Dec 13** Choir Practice @ 6:30pm, Praise Team Practice @ 7:30pm
- Dec 14** *Session Reports Due*, C.E. meeting @ 1:30pm
- Dec 15** *Frist Press articles due*, Pizza & Caroling @ 5:30pm
- Dec 17** *Third Sunday of Advent*, Youth Service at Refuge Armona
- Dec 19** Session meeting @ 6pm
- Dec 20** Choir Practice @ 6:30pm, Praise Team Practice @ 7:30pm
- Dec 24** *Fourth Sunday of Advent*, Christmas Eve Service @ 5:30pm, NO YOUTH GROUP
- Dec 25** *Christmas Day (office closed)*

\* via Zoom



## Summary of Nov. 13, 2023 Session Meeting

### Deacons

- Reported 78 and 6 homebound took communion in Oct.
- \$100 each to the Soup Kitchen and Crossroads

### Clerk's Report

- Reported Active Members as of Nov 1, 2023 total—83

### Pastor's Report

- Opened Session with a devotional time
- Heard testimonies and approved 6 new members

### Church Growth

- Reported planning for Pizza and Caroling event

### Finance

- Approved paying bookkeeper 6 weeks maternity leave at 16 hours a week at her regular pay rate.
- Approved hiring Gail Forsythe as temporary bookkeeper while Athena is on maternity leave.

### **Called Meeting of Session Nov. 21**

### Clerk's Report

- Noted approval of Called Meeting was by email vote
- Noted approval to baptize the Adams children on Dec. 3

### Pastor's Report

- Heard testimonies and approved 6 new members



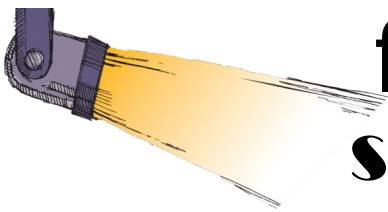
### The New City Catechism

52 Questions  
& Answers  
for Our Hearts  
& Minds  
Introduction by  
Kathy Keller



### **What does God require in the ninth and tenth commandments?**

*Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive. Tenth, that we are content, not envying anyone.*



# fpc Family Spotlight



## The Rajsakup Family

**Who are we:** Jim is a Hanford native and Annette grew up in Exeter. We first met while working, Jim as a Kings County Fireman and Annette as a Lemoore Police Officer. Later we married and eventually had two children. Jim transferred to Cal Fire and Annette retired to raise the kids. Our son Christopher went to Dordt University on a football scholarship and after graduating, he married Elizabeth in October 2022. Our daughter Alysha spent her first year in college at ASU, but has now transferred Grand Canyon University to double major in Justice Studies and Psychology.

**Things we love:** Camping! We enjoy taking our fifth-wheel toy hauler to the desert to ride ATV's. We also camp at the coast and in the mountains.

**FPC:** Annette first found FPC when she was attending Community Bible Study and FPC was hosting the study back in about 2007. Alysha still remembers coming into the church and attending the "Red Lambs" childcare group. Annette and Sheri Winterowd became friends through both CBS and their sons being classmates. After trying different churches in the area, Sheri's invite lead us to FPC. We first began attending FPC regularly around 2012 and Annette became a member in 2014. Alysha was baptized at FPC and became a member herself in 2017 the same year Annette became the Office Administrator. In 2019, Annette was asked to become an Elder and began serving on the Church Growth Committee. FPC is our home and this church is our Family.

**Fun Facts:** Annette has ridden horses, shown dogs and is considered an "animal whisper" by her friends. Jim loves to BBQ and could grill an old shoe and make it taste good.

# Church DEACONS

The holidays are upon us and as we go about our various shopping trips, the Deacons would ask that you remember our community and the less fortunate people that could use our help. Specifically, the Kings Gospel Pantry is always in need of food donations of non-perishable items (i.e. canned goods, boxed meals/ side dishes, cereals, etc.)

Additionally, as we go into the cold weather season the need for warm clothing (i.e. coats, sweaters, gloves, hats, etc.) is greater than ever. This is a perfect opportunity to clean out your closet of gently used clothing and make a much-needed donation.

To drop off your food/or clothing donations, the Deacons have provided baskets and clothing bins in the area before the Fellowship Hall entrance. Thank you for your future and past donations to assist with our church's mission of serving those in need and being the hands of Jesus!!



## Food & Clothing Collection



# Bible Trivia

1. When Jesus entered Jerusalem during His Triumphal Entry, what was He riding on?
  - a. Horse
  - b. Camel
  - c. Donkey
  - d. Chariot
2. What was the name of the high priest's servant who had his ear cut off by the disciple Peter?
  - a. Malchus
  - b. Alexander
  - c. Matthew
  - d. Rufus
3. What did the soldiers offer Jesus to drink while on the cross?
  - a. Fruit juice
  - b. Water
  - c. Vinegar
  - d. Wine
4. Who carried the cross for Christ?
  - a. Simeon
  - b. Simon Peter
  - c. Simon of Cyrene
  - d. Thomas
5. How many times did Peter deny Christ?
  - a. Two times
  - b. Three times
  - c. Onetime
  - d. Four times
6. What was the Jewish feast being celebrated the week Christ was crucified?
  - a. Pentecost
  - b. Passover
  - c. Firstfruits
  - d. Unleavened Bread
7. For how many pieces of silver did Judas betray Christ?
  - a. 10
  - b. 20
  - c. 30
  - d. 40
8. What color was the robe that the Romans placed upon Jesus?
  - a. Purple
  - b. Green
  - c. Yellow
  - d. Brown
9. In what was Jesus wrapped before he was buried?
  - a. Sheep skin
  - b. Linen clothes
  - c. Golden robes
  - d. Goat skin
10. Who rolled away the tomb stone?
  - a. Soldiers
  - b. God
  - c. Jesus
  - d. Angel

# Faith & Fellowship



## PIZZA & CAROLING

**Friday Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>**

We will be meeting to enjoy pizza at

**5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall**

then head out to carol in the front courtyard



*Bring a dessert to share when we return from caroling*

**Reminder!** Deacons hope you can bring clothing and nonperishable food to help those in our community who are in need. Collection baskets are available in the church hallway outside the Fellowship Hall.



## “Powerhouse”



**Children's Church**  
(ages K—5th)

**SUNDAY MORNINGS**  
**@ 10:30 am**

(children attend church, then are released to their classes)

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month**  
**at 5:00pm**



**YOUTH GROUP**  
*grades 6<sup>th</sup>—12<sup>th</sup>*

## Exercise class

The FPC exercise class  
M, W & F mornings @ 9:00am in the  
FPC Outreach Building (220 Dewey Street)

# DECEMBER

## Birthdays & \*Anniversaries

- 1 Louise Collins
- 3 Janice Mills
- 4 Steve Essepian, Shirley Ramm. \*Chuck & Mary Kinney
- 5 Barbara Kovac
- 9 Owen Montoya
- 12 Laurie Essepian, Stacey Jones
- 13 \* Pastor Tim & Jen Brown
- 14 \*Ken & Laurie Tazelaar
- 17 \*Steve & Marjorie Froberg
- 18 Adelyn King
- 22 Greg Connelly
- 25 Pastor Tim Brown
- 26 Georgina Snyder

P O Box 1185  
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#### STAFF:

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**Nancy Roller** Custodian  
[nancyroller8@yahoo.com](mailto:nancyroller8@yahoo.com)

Church Office Hours: 9:00am—1:00pm (Mon—Fri)

Send prayer requests to [hanfordfpcprayer@gmail.com](mailto:hanfordfpcprayer@gmail.com)  
other information to [office@fpchanford.org](mailto:office@fpchanford.org)



Please contact the office with any updates, additions or corrections. We don't want to miss anyone or list your special date incorrectly.