



Sharing the Love of Christ

First United Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

PO Box 37

1000 Douglas Avenue

Las Vegas New Mexico 87701

DECEMBER 2021

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS



Dear FUPC Family and Friends,

We are fast approaching Christmas, and yet I don't feel the anticipation and excitement that are often in the air at this time of year. Temperatures in the 60s and recently even the 70s make it hard for this Kansas-raised girl to get in the spirit of the holidays. But it's more than that this year. Over the last couple of weeks, there has been a heaviness in the air whenever I've gathered with others—both online and in person. Certainly, the pall of the continuing pandemic covers things. And consequently many things just feel out of whack. Teachers are seeing it in students; my daughter Tegan, who is a middle school teacher, said to me recently, "The kids just aren't OK." Expectations that we should be able to put the pandemic behind us—even though case numbers continue to soar—seem high. People are stressed. People are feeling the loss of changes brought on by the pandemic. People are feeling the tension of political division. Rather than the good feels of silver bells and jingle bells, the air is still and heavy.

Additionally, of course, many people are grieving losses. We in the FUPC family have lost loved ones and friends. The world has suffered much loss, too; as I've said before, each COVID death statistic means the grief of family and friends who held that person dear. And even for those who aren't personally feeling loss through death of a loved one, many are feeling other losses—perhaps the loss of good health or financial security. But I think we are also feeling the loss of confidence that things are unfolding as they should. As my daughter Emily recently posted on Facebook, "I was --perhaps foolishly--optimistic that with all that has happened in the last year and a half, we would take better care of each other. I long for a world with justice."

How do we address these feelings of heaviness in a season that we've learned should focus on big Santas in red suits and bright lights and lots of laughter? The answer is not to pretend the heaviness is not there. Advent is, after all, a time when we wait in the darkness for the coming of the light; it is a time when we should be able to lament the things that are heavy and dark, even as we faithfully anticipate the birth of Christ.

If you, too, are feeling this heaviness and would like sacred space in which to acknowledge it, please plan to attend the "Blue Christmas" service that will be held at 5 p.m. on Sunday, December 12. The service will offer remembrance of those we have lost, the pain we are feeling, our own needs and suffering, and the gift of light that is surely coming, even if it seems far away from us now. It will also offer an opportunity for us to capture on paper those things that are heavy for us right now and to remind ourselves and others that we are not alone in these feelings.

Of course, we will also embrace the fullness of the season and the joy of Christmas at other times throughout the season. But as theologian Barbara Brown Taylor reminds us, there is danger in what she calls "full solar spirituality," where we are pushed to think that, because we are Christians, we never feel personal or worldly burdens. Please join us the evening of the 12th if you need to acknowledge the heaviness in the air, and invite friends who might also need this time to acknowledge their grief and heaviness.

With thanks for all of you,
Pastor Katie

CONNECT WITH PASTOR KATIE!

Coffee with Katie – 9:00 a.m. on Tuesdays via Zoom and starting **January 4, 2022**, Coffee with Katie will meet in person at **Travelers Café** every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m.

Friend me on Facebook! Search for “Katie Palmer” and look for a picture of me! If you send a friend request, please let me know you’ve done so. I’ve gotten many “fake” requests from people posing as folks I know.

Plan a visit! I’d love to visit with you one-on-one in your home or over tea. Let me know if you’d like to schedule a visit.



ONLINE GIVING REMINDER

If you are using our online giving process, please check the “end date” of your automatic payments. And thanks for giving so generously this year. Contact the church office if you have any questions.



If you are not on the email distribution list for our Sunday Online Worship bulletin and would like to be, please send an email, (fupc.nm@gmail.com) to the church office requesting that your name/email be added. The bulletin is emailed on Friday for the service along with a message from Pastor Katie.

Please join us on Zoom
2022 Budget Meeting
Saturday, December 4, 2021
at 9:00 AM



Sunday Morning Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5739200081>



WORSHIP TIDBITS

Did you know that the observance of Advent dates back to as early as the fifth century C.E., but that it was originally observed with fasting? It wasn't until much later—probably the 19th century—that Advent began to be seen as a season of hope for the coming of Christ into the world. It was then that traditions such as lighting the Advent Wreath or counting the days until Christmas on an Advent Calendar became popular.



We here at First United Presbyterian will observe the traditional Advent Wreath and our non-traditional REVERSE Advent Calendar, for which we will collect items needed at Samaritan House (see related article). Our worship will allow us to “Be Filled and Spring Forth.” The Worship and Music Committee hopes that you will spend time feeling the ways God pours hope, peace, joy, and love over us during this Advent season as we once again await Christ’s coming into the world.

We also recognize that the winter holidays are not happy times for everyone. For those who have experienced loss—loss of a loved one or loss of health, for example—and for those who deal with mental illness or who simply feel burdened at this time of year—the holidays can be sad and stressful. We will be holding a **“Blue Christmas” service** on Sunday, Dec. 12, at 5 p.m. for anyone wanting to recognize the pain and stress that can come with this time of year. See more in “Pastor’s Ponderings.”

The first Sunday of Christmas comes fast on the heels of Christmas Eve worship, which will be on Friday, Dec. 24, at 5:30 p.m. To celebrate the birth of Jesus and the way in which this holy birth fills us with God’s love, Sunday worship on Dec. 26 will be filled with special music and storytelling. Plan to join us!

Calendar for Advent/Christmas

- November 28 – 1st Sunday of Advent
- December 5 – 2nd Sunday of Advent
- December 12 – 3rd Sunday of Advent
- December 12 – Blue Christmas worship, 5 p.m.
- December 19 – 4th Sunday of Advent
- December 24 – Christmas Eve Worship, 5:30 p.m.
- December 26 – 1st Sunday of Christmas with special worship service
- January 2 – 2nd Sunday of Christmas with observance of Epiphany

HYBRID IN DECEMBER

We will continue hybrid worship in December, but please note that COVID case numbers in the county and in the state are still higher than we’d like to see. Remember, wherever you go, to mask up, keep your distance from others, and wash your hands often. If you or someone you know is not yet vaccinated, please encourage them to get the vaccine. It will help us save lives! We will continue taking the precautions of requiring masks, distancing in the sanctuary, and asking you to sign a contact tracing list.

We look forward to seeing you—in the sanctuary or online!

AN INVITATION TO MAKE A REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR



It's not too late! If you'd like to participate in the Reverse Advent Calendar (RAC) project, there are a couple of ways to do so. You can start your own RAC box at home (adding the appropriate items to "catch up" to the current date), or you can sign up to bring one or more items to contribute to the sanctuary RAC box.

To make your own RAC box, take a nice sized box and put it in a prominent place—near your table or under your Christmas tree. You might cover it in Christmas wrapping paper. Then, each day of Advent, place an item in the box from the list below. Set aside a time each day to remember that this item will be a gift to someone who needs it. Perhaps at this time you could say a prayer for those who are in need.

Once you've placed the final item in your box, deliver your box to Samaritan House (501 7th Street). Samaritan House offices will be open Christmas week, Monday, Dec. 20 – Wed., Dec. 22, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. If you deliver before Dec. 22, you may have to "work ahead" to get all the items in your box. If you are unable to deliver your box, please let D.R. Palmer (303-775-7259) know, and he will arrange for someone to pick up your Advent box and deliver it.

To contribute to the church's sanctuary RAC box, sign up on the list in the sanctuary near the narthex door or let Pastor Katie know which item(s) you'd like to contribute, then bring them to worship on the designated Sunday. During our Advent Wreath litany, there will be a time to bring the RAC items forward to place in the sanctuary RAC box. If you are attending worship via Zoom, you can ask a friend to deliver the item for you or bring it to the church office during office hours.

Please note that we've updated the list since last year. Many of the items—especially food items—on last year's list are items that Samaritan House receives in abundance. Instead, this year's list includes items that are more personal and recognized as needs by Samaritan House staff—things like gloves and a writing journal.

November 28—water bottle
November 29—can of chicken
November 30—can of tuna
December 1—box of crackers
December 2—pair of gloves
December 3—can or jar of nuts
December 4—package of pasta
December 5—jar of spaghetti sauce
December 6—can of fruit
December 7—deck of cards
December 8—deodorant
December 9—bottle of shampoo
December 10—bottle of conditioner
December 11—bar of soap
December 12—beanie

December 13—tube of toothpaste
December 14—toothbrush
December 15—bottle of lotion
December 16—pair of socks (most clients are men)
December 17—comb/brush
December 18—writing journal or journal-sized spiral notebook
December 19—package of pens
December 20—candy treat
December 21—personal gift item (e.g., a bike lock, backpack, blanket, portable game, etc.)
December 22—personal card of note from you to a client





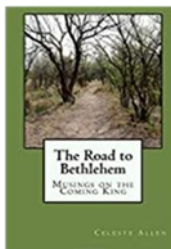
Advent Study ---- *The Road to Bethlehem: Musings on the Coming King*

This year's Advent Series started Nov. 28 and will run through Dec. 19. Participants are discussing *The Road to Bethlehem: Musings on the Coming King* by Celeste Allen, writer, retreat leader, and host of a retreat house in Italy.

In the author's words as the meditations begin, "The angel Gabriel has told [Mary] the child will be *called* the Son of God. But does she understand that this 'thing about to happen' will be God Himself? God clothed in soft baby flesh, half-blind and helpless, lullabied to sleep in her arms."

In the end, the author writes, "The shepherds could return to their sheep and only occasionally recall the amazing angelic visitation and the hasty trip to Bethlehem, bringing it up in their old age like a legend or a rumor... Or they could all change radically, dramatically, and permanently... I wonder, were the shepherds among the crowds who welcomed the adult Jesus into Jerusalem?"

Celeste Allen worked in corporate America before moving into full-time Christian ministry in the United Kingdom. She has been a presenter at conferences in the US, Europe, and as far afield as Thailand and Turkey.



Richard Lindeborg is leading the discussion, which is from 9 to 10 a.m. on the same zoom channel as our worship service.

The book is available used online for as little as \$4.88 in paperback (plus shipping) from online vendors. Paper Trail may also be able to order a copy, as can Richard Lindeborg.

Having discussed the introduction and Meditations 1-5 on Nov. 28, the December class sessions will be devoted to 6 or 7 meditations each week:

Dec. 5 Meditations 7-13

Dec 12 Meditations 14-19

Dec 19 Meditations 20-25

Class Will Discuss *Strength for The Journey in the New Year*

Note: There will be no Sunday Class on Dec. 26 or Jan. 2



Starting Jan. 12, the Sunday Morning Bible-Based Class for Adults and Youth will discuss the book *Strength for the Journey: A Pilgrimage of Faith in Community* (1st edition 2002) by Diana Butler Bass. The author presents a spiritual autobiography, giving insights on how parishes have confronted issues of change. The book has been a guide for thousands of Christians who have also found themselves "journeying" along a path toward a faith different from that discovered in childhood.

Offering thought-provoking portraits of eight parishes she attended over two decades, the author explores the major issues that have confronted mainline denominations, congregations, and parishioners during those years — from debates over women clergy to conflicts about diversity and community to scrimmages between tradition and innovation.

The discussions, led by Richard Lindeborg, will run through Feb. 27, and be held from 9 to 10 a.m. on Zoom at the same link as the weekly worship service. The book is available used online for \$5-\$10 including shipping, or Richard can order you a copy delivered to you. The reading assignment for the first Session is the introduction, "Processional," pp 1-20.

CLERGY RENEWAL GRANT UPDATE

Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs

You may have seen the article in the *Optic* about the award of our Clergy and Congregational Renewal Grant, which is funded by the Lilly Endowment Fund. How fortunate are we to be one of 156 congregations in the nation to receive this grant! And what an exciting summer we have in store for us! But preparing for that time of renewal takes lots of planning! Pastor Katie and Pam Abreu are co-chairing a Renewal Grant Task Force to make the preparations. We will keep you updated as those preparations come together. Here's how you can help: let your excitement for this time build as you hear more and more details about these upcoming events and this time of special worship; be open to helping with these wonderful new experiences when we offer you the opportunity to help lead or provide people power during this time of renewal; and, most importantly, plan now to participate next summer in the events led by professional coaches and church family members.

OFFICE TECH UPGRADE

Did you know that our Office and Pastor's computers are running Windows 7? That operating system was new in 2009, and went out of service in January 2020! We are very past due in upgrading our technology for our pastor and office manager. Your session recognized this and we asked Crystal and Pastor Katie what they would like to have. I'm happy to announce that new computers have arrived for them. It will take some time to get all of the files transferred and applications installed, but soon they will be deployed. Crystal will have an HP All-In-One and Pastor Katie will have an HP laptop with a docking station to connect to a desktop screen and keyboard. Both setups have ergonomic keyboards and a standing desk converter so they can work standing up or sitting down. Christmas is coming a little early this year for the office!

zoom



TO JOIN ANY FUPC EVENTS VIA ZOOM

You are welcome to worship in the sanctuary, but if you would like to continue worshipping online, here are the instructions to access Zoom:

- The easiest way to join worship or other FUPC public events is simply to go to our website (lvpresbyterian.org) and click on the "Join Us on Zoom" link.
- You can also open your web browser and go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5739200081>. If you haven't been on Zoom before, you'll see instructions for downloading the Zoom app and allowing your camera (if you have one) and microphone to be used by Zoom, and then the meeting will open.
- If you are new to Zoom, we recommend going to the link above a few minutes before the event so that you can get the Zoom app set up ahead of time.
- If you don't have a computer but want **to join by phone, call 312-626-7699** and enter the meeting ID number (573-920-0081) when prompted. Please note this is a Chicago number, so if your phone plan does not have unlimited calls, you may incur long-distance charges.
- For Zoom committee meetings and other non-public meetings, you'll receive a link from your committee chair.

MISSION & PEACEMAKING

MENAU SCHOOL INFORMATION



As part of our Mission and Peacemaking prayers on Sundays, we include prayers for a diverse range of groups, one of which is the Menaul School in Albuquerque. We feel it will help if we explain to you all the reasoning behind our prayer choices and their importance to our church.

Menaul is a faith-based independent school for grades 6-12 and since 1992 includes a middle school program and a diverse intellectual college prep education for all students. The teacher to student ratio is 1:7 and all the students participate in service projects with about 32 percent participating in international travel programs. More than 84 percent of the students identify themselves as coming from racially or ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Menaul School has been affiliated with our Presbyterian Church for a long time as many families from our part of Northern New Mexico have had members attend Menaul School. In 1896, Rev. James Menaul got funding for a boarding school to serve Spanish Speaking boys, most of whom were from Northern New Mexico, at a time and place when public education was practically non-existent for boys in Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico and often fees were paid in livestock or grain.

In 1972, the Presbyterian Church turned over control and financing of Menaul to a Board of Trustees. Since that time, the only financial support from the Presbyterian Church has been the church-wide annual Joy Offering at Christmas plus some gifts from other churches or individuals.

Menaul emphasizes “world smart”, not just “book smart,” preparing their students for life in a world with a variety of cultures, countries, and ethnicities. The religious education they provide their students includes a basic understanding of world religious teaching and traditions. It encourages students to have an appreciation for religious and spiritual dimensions of human experience and to examine their own beliefs.

If you want more information, the Menaul School website is www.menaulschool.org.

Thanks to Rudy Laumbach for his diligent work of providing information for this article. Menaul School is such a deeply integrated part of Las Vegas Presbyterians that, I hope, this helps all of us understand the school better and why our weekly prayers are part of the M and P mission. Our church gives monthly to Menaul, and the Historical Library is also supported by many in our church.

—Mission and Peacekeeping Committee

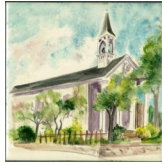
DEVOTIONALS

REMEMBER WEEKLY WEDNESDAY DEVOTIONALS!

Pastor Katie (1st Wednesdays), Rod Billingsley (2nd Wednesdays), Pat Halverson (3rd and 5th Wednesdays) and Karyl Lyne (4th Wednesdays). You will continue to find devotionals on the FUPC Facebook page or by clicking on the “Devotionals” link under “Latest News” on our website at lvpresbyterian.org.



1000 Douglas Avenue
PO Box 37
Las Vegas NM 87701
505-425-7763



Website: www.lvpresbyterian.org

Facebook: Las Vegas First United Presbyterian (NM)

Email: fupc.nm@gmail.com

Sunday Schedule

9:00 a.m. - Bible Based Study via Zoom

10:30 a.m. - Sunday Worship in person and via Zoom

Fellowship Hour following the worship service on Zoom



Samaritan House Food Donations

DECEMBER 2021

Canned Meats (tuna, chicken, stew)

Coffee and Tea are always appreciated



3rd	Mariah Weinrich	10th	Connie Trujillo	23rd	Juli Salman
	Peter Linder	14th	Gail Malley		Nina Johns
4th	Denice Spicer	17th	Harper Geng	24th	Elizabeth Bunch
	Diego Trujillo	20th	Betty Kretz		Richard Lindeborg
5th	Gay Veit		Douglas Baskett	26th	Cordell Halverson
8th	Renee Buchanan	21st	Pam Abreu	27th	Wamoth Spicer