



JANUARY 2024

THE NEWSLETTER

A Publication of First Presbyterian Church, Brazoria, Texas

Please Pray

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

While we wait for the return of Christ, we are to be about Christ's work. One of the things this includes is praying. Jesus set for us an example of prayer—not only the Lord's Prayer but going off by himself to pray. We need to pray that our heart is right to accept Jesus who is coming again. We should also pray for each other, our neighbors, those who receive assistance from our church, our family, our friends, those who mourn, those who celebrate, those who are in war zones, those that are hungry and have no way to get food, the refugees, the homeless, the lonely, our church and many more that I have not named.

We should pray throughout the year. Our church attendance is not as high as we would like it to be. Some people believe that if we would stop our Facebook broadcast, people would come back to church. First, many of the people we reach on Facebook don't live locally, in fact, some don't live in this country. Second, statistics show that churches have not bounced back from COVID. Regardless of whether or not churches continued to meet in person during the pandemic, their attendance has not returned to pre-pandemic numbers.

As we start the new year, I would like to ask each of you to pause from your busy schedules at noon and pray for our church. Pausing at the same time will enable us to pray as though we were together. We are in a time of trying to revitalize our church. Nancy Boyd is talking to some of the old members, as well as some of the members who don't attend regularly, to see if they will come back. We are missing a generation or two of the children who grew up in this church as well as some of the people who feel the church has failed them in some way. If you know someone who has stopped coming to our church or who doesn't have a church home, tell them that they are always welcome here. It's not as important to us where they've been or why they haven't been coming as it is where they are going. We would like to share the journey with them. Please pray that Nancy's efforts and the efforts of all who try to get their families and friends to attend will bear good fruit.

Here is a sample prayer if you have trouble with praying for this: *Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask for your guidance and blessings upon our church. We pray that you will help us to grow in faith and also in numbers so that we may better serve you and your people. We ask that you bless our leaders with wisdom and discernment, so that they may make the right decisions for our church. We pray that you will bless our members with a spirit of unity and love, so that we may work together to do your will. We ask that you bless our outreach efforts, so that we may reach those who have fallen away from the gathering together of the many and those that do not know of your love and bring them into your kingdom. We pray that you would bless our worship services, so that we may glorify you in all that we do. We ask all these things in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Love, Tracy

PRAYER list...



SUNDAY SCHOOL

You are invited to study God's word on Sunday.
9:15 - 10:15 a.m. Everyone is welcome (all ages).

What we prayed for December:

Prayer Focus:

Keep in Prayer: Debbie Floyd, Peggy Badders, Nancy Bristow, Sandy Tinnon, Paula Emmons, Nancy Olene and Jr. LaBreck, Judy Rogers-Parker, Minnie Martinez, Matthew Stephenson, Martha McCrearey, Jeb Ogburn, Ricky Morgan and family, Nancy (R) McLaren, Justin Lane Adrio, Sheila Williams, McKenna Buchanan, Debbie Sala and family, Mary Catherine McLaren, Pat Whitehead, Marilyn Shockley, Sandra Clarke, John Philips, Anette Robertson, Linda Lutz, Kristen Gragert, Sharon Teague, Edwina Clingman, Brittany Kennison, Earl and Nelda Gragert, Linda McAda, Wynelle Vollbaum, Melodie Kacal, Nancy Oertli, Cole Buchanan, Jesse and Wendy Abbott, David and Sue McRae, Holly Chrysler, Barbara Ferrell, David Marcum, John Jones and family, Barbara Sullivan, Jamie LeBouef.

Comfort and Hope: Family and friends of Harvey Kersh. Family and friends of Nina. Family and friends of Grace. Family and friends of Korben (passing of his mother). Family and friends of John Norris, Forest Bend Fire Chief (at his passing). Families in North Carolina affected by tornado. Israel-Hamas Hostage Exchange. Peace of Christ in our country and the world.

Other Prayers: Tracy, Norma, Joyce, Sue Ellen, families safe travel during the holidays, students taking Semester exams, families safe and healthy during the holidays, elderly, homeless, hungry, city workers, elected leaders of our government, military and our veterans, First Responders, EMT, firefighters, police officers and their families, our church and communities of faith.

Sharing the Joy: Sandy Tinnon answered prayer. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God..." Isaiah 61:10

How can we pray for you today? If you have a prayer request, please call the church office, Rev. Tracy Williams, Ginny Raska or Linda Matheson.

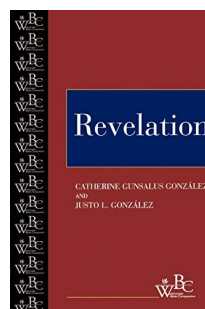


PRAYER MINISTRY

Prayer is a powerful gift, praying together and for one another makes a difference. As we pray for others we experience God's love and compassion for others.

Prayer Group card ministry during 2023, we have sent 295 special occasion cards (i.e., birthday, anniversary, birth of a child, graduation, Valentines Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas...), and Sympathy, Praying for You, Thinking of You, Get Well... A special thank you to those who have supported our card ministry with monetary gifts, postage stamps and card.

Prayer Group Ministry
Congregational Care



REVELATION BIBLE STUDY

Resumes on
Tuesday, 1/9/2024
11:00 a.m.

The Rev. Tracy Williams, leading



All-Church Potluck

January 21, 2024

Immediately following worship

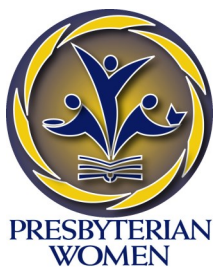
POTLUCK DINNER

followed by the
Session Meeting

Plan on attending the January Church Dinner. Bring your favorite Potluck food to share.

OUTREACH and MISSION

Thank you to everyone who helped in any way with the Thanksgiving and Christmas Baskets. Five Thanksgiving Baskets were given to families in November. In December, eight Christmas Baskets including 22 children were given. They all thank us very much and send all of us their blessings. This is such a worthwhile project. Thank you very much for helping!



Presbyterian Women

January 28, 2024
following worship

Sacred Encounters

Lesson Four: Mary and Martha
Encounter Jesus (Luke 10:38-42)
and light lunch.



Ordination and Installation

January 14, 2024

Robin Harrington will be Ordained
and

Robin Harrington and Ginny Raska
will be Installed as Elders
during worship.

The congregation also voted
two new Trustees
Gary Hyer and Sarah Wilson.

Thank you for agreeing to serve.

Also, thank you to Nelda Gragert and
Linda Matheson for your dedication
throughout your term as Elders.



The Flight into Egypt

In Matthew 2:13-15, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus flee to Egypt when Herod seeks the life of the child. Douglas Rhodenbaugh gifted the church with this rendition of the Flight into Egypt which was carved and painted by his godson. Thank you, Douglas!



**Poinsettias in Sanctuary
in Memory/in Honor**

In memory of George & Hazel Hoopingartner from Owen & Nancy Boyd;

In memory of Norman & Helen Boyd from Owen & Nancy Boyd;

In memory of Bill Clarke from Sandra Clarke;

In memory of Sonny & Lillie Gragert from Earl & Nelda Gragert;

In memory of Fred & Twillie Jacks from Earl & Nelda Gragert;

In honor of Earl & Nelda's Children from Earl & Nelda Gragert;

In memory of Kathy Hyer from Gary Hyer;

In memory of Carl McElrath from Jo Beth McElrath;

In memory of Lois McElrath from Jo Beth McElrath;

In memory of James McLaren from Nancy McLaren;

In memory of Mary Eloise & Jordie McNeill from Ginny Raska;

In honor of The Wilson Family from Ginny Raska;

In memory of Johnny Taylor from Linda Taylor;

In loving memory of her loved ones from Delores Ward Thompson;

In memory of Bruce Williams from Tracy Williams;

In memory of Don & Betty Julian from Tracy Williams;

In honor of Mary Ruth Rhodenbaugh from Tracy Williams.



**Remember the Blessing Box
and the Food Pantry**

Please bring donations for the Blessing Box and/or the Food Pantry when we have Communion. When you come to receive heavenly food, remember those who have no earthly food to eat. Please bring pantry items.

Thank you! Thank you!



	Total	Elders	Facebook
12/3/23	21	6	100
12/10/23	24	5	79
12/17/23	27	7	92
12/24/23 a.m.	20	5	75
12/24/23 p.m.	27	4	89
12/31/23	14	3	95

Lectionary Gospel Readings for January:

Sunday's Date	Gospel Passage
January 7, 2024	Mark 1:4-11
January 14, 2024	John 1:43-51
January 21, 2024	Mark 1:14-20
January 28, 2024	Mark 1:21-28



***** TREASURER REPORT *****

November Income \$7,971.83
November Expenses \$8,563.15



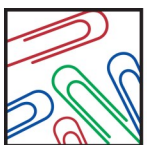
Two ships

The year like a ship in the distance
comes over life's mystical sea.
We know not what change of existence
'tis bringing to you or to me.
But we wave out the ship that is leaving
and we welcome the ship coming in,
although it be loaded with grieving,
with trouble, or losses, or sin. ...

The new ship comes nearer and nearer,
we know not what freight she may hold.
Hope stands at the helm there to steer her;
our hearts are courageous and bold.
Sail in with new joys and new sorrows.
Sail in with new banners unfurled.
Sail in with unwritten tomorrows.
Sail in with new tasks for the world.

—from "New Year," Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day Church Office Closed	2 Church Office Closed	3	4	5 10-Noon Food Pantry ☺ Dominic Sanchez	6
7 Communion	8 ☺ Danny Mikeska	9	10 ☺ Christopher Buchanan	11	12 10-Noon Food Pantry	13
14 Ordination & Installation	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Church Office Closed	16	17	18	19 10-Noon Food Pantry	20
21 Church Dinner Session ☺ April Levesque ♥ Biff & Lynn Slater	22	23	24 ☺ Richard McLaren	25	26 10-Noon Food Pantry ☺ Keith Brown	27
28 Presbyterian Women	29	30	31	Every Sunday Every Tuesday 9:15 Breakfast 10 a.m. Prayer Group 9:30 Sunday School 11 a.m. Bible Study 10:30 Worship 6 p.m. Game Night		



Office Hours

The church office will generally be open Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
The exception will be holidays.