

Special points of interest:

• Sunday, November 22

8:30 Worship
9:45 Sunday School
11:00 Worship
12:00—Church Lunch
4:15 Children's Choir
5:00 Youth Choir/Bells
6:00 Youth Groups

• Monday, November 23

9:00—Choir Rehearsal
1:00—Westminster Bells
7:00—Choir Rehearsal

• Tuesday, November 24

9:00—Disciple II
10:00—Program Staff
11:00—Church Staff
4:30—Steering
5:30—Young Adult Council

• Wednesday, November 25

9:00—Disciple I
12:00—Mid-Day Prayer

• Thursday, November 26-

Friday, November 27

Church Office Closed

• Sunday, November 29

8:30—Worship
9:45—Sunday School
11:00—Worship
4:15—Children's Choir
5:00—Youth Choir/Bells

• Monday, November 30

1:00—Westminster Bells
• Tuesday, December 1
7:00—Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00—Disciple II
12:10—Advent Noel & Lunch
5:30—Young Adult Bible Study

• Wednesday, December 2

9:00—Disciple I
10:00—Program Staff
11:00—Church Staff
12:00—Mid-Day Prayer
5:15—Wednesday Night Supper
6:00—Session Ministries
6:00—Youth Bible Study

• Thursday, December 3

9:00—Choir Rehearsal
9:00—LINK Fold
11:45—Lectio Divina
3:00—Knitting
4:30—Steering Committee
7:00—Choir Rehearsal

• Friday, December 4

12:00—LINK Deadline

The LINK



Volume 3, Issue 22

November 20, 2009

Advent

It's hard to believe that Advent is almost here - since Thanksgiving falls late this year, Advent begins that next Sunday, the 29th - wow! And what a jam-packed pre-Christmas time of preparation it is - shopping, running errands, sending cards, cooking, parties - it's all fairly dizzying to think about! This is not even to mention what all is going on here at the church, and it's pretty overwhelming too! Our various choirs and ensembles in the Music Ministry are working feverishly to have a wonderful assortment of music for the month of December, and you are invited to attend and/or participate in all of it! Here's a rundown of what to expect:

SUNDAYS in Advent -
November 29, December 6, 13,
20: stirring Advent worship at
8:30 and 11:00.

Advent worship will be characterized by lighting the Advent wreath each week, *all* choirs participating in worship with voices, bells, solos, instruments, and Advent music written throughout the centuries for congregation and choirs.

TUESDAYS in Advent -
December 1, 8, 15: Noon-day
Noels, 12:10-12:35 p.m. in the
chapel, followed by a delicious
light lunch free of charge.

What is there to say about our annual Noels? Well, ask anyone who regularly attends, and the compliments will keep coming. *Make your Tuesday lunch hours in December your gift to yourself in the midst of a hectic time.* Come gather in our chapel with a friend - or fellow office workers

- for a worshipful time of peace, reflection, scripture, prayer, and *beautiful* music. Each week will feature special music performed by guest artists (more on that momentarily), and following the brief service will be a terrific gathering time of eating together. Super-talented Lorraine Guice is in charge of the lunches this year, and I can tell you that she has some *wonderful* menus planned! Even if you can't make lunch, come for the service - you'll be glad you did, and you will leave refreshed and re-energized. What a proud history we have had of special musicians enhancing these services, from solo handbell players to teen prodigy cellists to trumpet duos... the list goes on and on; we are proud to continue the tradition this year with the following guest artists:

• **December 1: SOX!** Yes, the wonderful Shreveport Opera Express artists who have been enhancing our Sanctuary Choir this year will be performing for us. Come meet, greet, and savor the talents of Kathleen Jasinkas, Kristen DiNinno, and Kevin Doherty in the wonderful acoustics of our chapel.

• **December 8: Julius Abrahams, pianist.** Julius is a visiting artist who is the SOX accompanist this year. His pianistic talents are equal in every way to their vocal talents, and you are in for a treat!

• **December 15: Jennifer Carsillo Buttermann, concert violinist.** Jennifer has soloed with our local orchestra as well as orchestras across the country, in addition to performing with various area ensembles. Her tone and presence are magnificent.

WEDNESDAY, December 9:
All-church Christmas dinner
and program, beginning at
5:15 with the program to
follow at 6:30 (reservations
needed for dinner).

This will be a fun evening for all - come dressed as your favorite Christmas story character (yes, adults too!), and we will enjoy delicious food, games, a carol sing-along, and impromptu acting-out of the Christmas story!

THURSDAY, December 24:
Christmas Eve worship at
5:30, with prelude music by
brass quartet beginning at 5:15.

This eagerly-anticipated service will be filled with joy and wonder as we celebrate the coming of the Christ-child with candles, communion, glorious carols, and spectacular music!

SUNDAY, December 27:
Lessons and Carols in one joint
worship service at 11:00. Come hear the scripture of the season coupled with congregational carols of the season, a special message by Austin Seminary student, Kelly Updegraff, and guest pianist *extraordinaire*, Gay Grosz. Rejoice and be merry on this very joyous day!



Library Notes

NEW BOOKS

Biography

Have a Little Faith—Mitch Albom
Mitch Albom is also the author of *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Cokie Roberts, political analyst, says *Have a Little Faith* teaches that belief can come upon us in unsuspecting ways—and mentors might be hiding in plain sight.

Non-Fiction

Dewey—Vicki Myron
Through this plucky library cat we come

to know and love the town of Spencer, Iowa, and learn lessons about courage, generosity, and the power of relationships.

Wildflower—Mark Seal

This is the story of the extraordinary life and untimely death in Africa of Joan Root, a sixty-nine year-old naturalist, Oscar-nominated wildlife filmmaker, and staunch conservationalist.

Fiction

Half Broke Horses—Jeanette Walls
This is the story of Jeannette Walls, a nonsense and resourceful grandmother, Lily Casey Smith. By age six Lily was helping her father break horses. She left home to teach in a frontier town, riding

five hundred miles on her pony, alone, to get to her job. She later learned to drive a car and fly a plane.

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan—Shanghai Girls—Lisa See

In 1937, Shanghai is the Paris of Asia, a city of great wealth and glamour. Thanks to the financial security and material comforts provided by their father, two sisters are having the time of their lives until the day their father tells them that he has gambled away their wealth and that in order to repay his debts he must sell the girls as wives to suitors from California.



YOU, TOO, CAN BE A PART OF THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT!

Our annual Christmas program will take place on Wednesday, December 9, beginning at 5:30 with Christmas icebreakers, carols, and a scrumptious spread of ham with cranberry sauce, butter beans, squash casserole, biscuits, and sweet potato pie. Afterwards, everyone will have an opportunity to select a costume to play a role in the Christmas story, taken from both Matthew's and Luke's accounts. After everyone is in costume, we will adjourn to the chapel for the retelling and re-enactment of the story of the Savior's birth! Come one, come all! Come join the drama and be caught up in the joyous story that we celebrate together. PLEASE let the church office know of your intention to attend by Monday, Dec. 7.



The time has come once again for the annual Young Adult Christmas Party!

Make sure to mark your calendars for **Saturday, December 12**, and join us for food and fellowship at the home of the Revs. Pen and Lindsey Peery (367 Ockley Dr.). Party hours are from **7-10:30 PM**, with childcare available at the church beginning at 6:30 PM. Bring yourself, bring your spouse, bring your friends, and bring your beverage of choice -- **dinner will be provided**. Please RSVP to the church office (222-0604) by Monday, December 7, and include your request for childcare if needed.



Order Your Poinsettias

Advent season is fast approaching! This year the congregation is being given the opportunity to participate

by purchasing poinsettias either to honor or in memory of a loved one. There will be a bulletin insert on December 13, 2009, listing donors and honorees. The cost of each plant is \$12.00, and orders must be placed by Sunday, November 29 .

Please fill out **one order form for each plant** and return with your check to the church office. Additional order forms are available in the office. Make checks payable to **Presbyterian Women**. The listing in the bulletin insert for this plant should read:

To the glory of God in loving **memory** of:

To the glory of God in **honor** of:

Please check the appropriate line below:

_____ I will pick up my plant after the 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service.

_____ I will deliver my plant to a hospitalized or homebound member.

Name of Recipient: _____

_____ Please have someone else deliver my plant to a hospitalized or homebound member.

Purchased by: _____

Check # _____



Presbyterian Children's
Homes & Services

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services Shreveport Child and Family Program update:

The Shreveport Child and Family Program continues to work closely with other service agencies in the Shreveport-Bossier community to serve families in need. Primary sources of referrals for this year have been Caddo Parish Office of Community Services, Bossier Parish Office of Community Services, Caddo Juvenile Justice System, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) and FINS (Families in Need of Services), a program belonging to Volunteers for Youth Justice. The Shreveport Child and Family Program received 64 referrals during the months of January through July and provided services to 55 families with 102 children. Direct services including parenting, counseling, anger management, household

management, and financial assistance have been provided. A parenting group in which more than 25 parents attended was also provided. The program was closed during August and September while Director, Rebecca Mayfield, was out on maternity leave. We continue to be grateful for the support of the Presbyterian churches and community that make it possible for us to serve families in need.

I would like to share with you an example of how our ministry

works:

A referral was received in March from Family Services with Office of Community Services (OCS) requesting parenting, household management, counseling, and financial assistance for a young mother with three small children. OCS became involved with the family after receiving a report of neglect. The case was not validated but the mother was referred for services. We met to complete an assessment and agreed to provide the

parenting and household management as well as assist with financial needs. A referral was made for the mother for individual counseling. Mom struggles with depression and had no support system in place. The children's father is in prison and his family is not involved with the children. The family was residing with a family friend and in the process of trying to secure housing. We worked on a budget to help determine what the family can afford and look into available assistance.

The family received services for three months and goals were reached. Mom is now working and able to support the family's needs. Mom was also able to secure appropriate housing, she is following the budget created, family routines and rules are being followed, and mom continued to receive counseling to manage her depression. The children's behaviors have improved and mom is feeling capable of handling the everyday stressors as they come.

Peggy and Shelby Guilbert Invite You to the Annual Church Christmas Party
 520 Pierremont Road
 Sunday, December 13, 2009, 6:00 p.m.
 A special welcome to new members.
 A-G dessert H-O salad P-Z lasagna
 RSVP Church 222-0604 or
 Peggy and Shelby Guilbert 868-6653

PROVIDENCE HOUSE CHRISTMAS BAGS FOR ADULTS

PW Circles are collecting items to fill Christmas gift bags for the adult residents of Providence House. A basket has been placed in the office and marked for the items. Examples of items included in past years are scarves, costume jewelry, sewing kits, note paper, make-up brushes, and watches for the women. Items for men include socks, shaving supplies, shoe shine kits, wallets and watches. Please place your gifts in the basket by **Sunday, December 13**. Circle #3 will assemble the bags at their meeting on December 14 and deliver them to Providence House. Thank you.



FPC Teams Up with Action Taxi

First Presbyterian Church has an agreement with Action Taxi to honor a voucher system whereby church members with no ready access to transportation can travel to and from church. The church member simply calls Action Taxi at 222-8294 and explains that he or she wishes to use the voucher

agreement between First Presbyterian and Action Taxi to get to church and return home. When the taxi arrives, the church member needs only to sign the voucher. There is no cost to the member. The service is exclusively for transportation to and from First Presbyterian Church.



We urgently need teachers for children, youth and adult Sunday School Classes beginning in January!!

We especially need Unit and Work Shop Leaders for Crosswalk. If you would like to teach, please call or email Anita Parish (222-0604, aparish@fpcshreveport.com) or David Butterfield (222-2135, 470-6611, david@msrlaw.com).

First Presbyterian Church

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Volunteers for Youth Justice Annual Thanksgiving Breakfast for FPC Staff



L to R: Judge Paul Young, Rev. Pen Peery, Joe Duke, Judge David Matlock

Tuesday, November 17, the VYJ staff hosted the annual Thanksgiving Appreciation Breakfast for the FPC staff. VYJ Executive Director, Joe Duke, thanked the staff and members of First Presbyterian for their support throughout the years, and especially for the office space that FPC has donated to the program. Juvenile Court Judges, Paul Young, Ted Cox, and David Matlock attended and presented Pen Peery with a plaque in honor of the church's many contributions to VYJ. VYJ has grown significantly since it began, and now serves 5,149 children in crisis through various programs. VYJ is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with nine primary programs: CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Teen Court, Jumpstart Diversion Workshops, GEMS (Girls Mentoring), GENTS (Boys Mentoring), School Fight Diversion, Families in Need of Services (FINS), Truancy Prevention, Truancy Probation Services.

Family Advent Event November 22, 9:45 a.m.

Families with children from two-years-old through Grade Five are invited to come to the **HolyWord Theater** on Sunday for the beginning of a special program. There will be a short drama of the Christmas story characters reflecting on being prepared for Jesus' birth. Afterwards everyone will go upstairs to learn how the Advent Wreath can help us be prepared for the birth of Jesus. There will be materials available to make and/or decorate your own wreath for the family to use at home. **If you have a wreath at home, please bring it. If not, we will have some extras.**

Children and Advent

All of the children's Sunday School classes will focus on the scriptures relating to the coming birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior. We are providing materials that can be used at home, as well, with an Advent Wreath. If you cannot come to the Advent Event on November 22nd, call the office to receive this special family devotional booklet. The Crosswalk unit during Advent will include cooking, a journey activity, music, science, and storytelling.

Advent is a season of anticipation and preparation to receive God's greatest gift—the birth of Jesus Christ. Booklets of Advent reflections written by students, faculty, and alumni of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary are available in the church office and other areas around the church.