

THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

JANUARY 2018 | Volume 17, Number 1



LET'S RECAP: 17 FROM '17

As one year comes to a close and another begins, we reflect on the last 12 months in ministry and mission together here at FPC. Here are seventeen highlights from 2017 (in no particular order). What stands out to you?

1 Blue Zone Status

After much work on behalf of the Wellness Committee to look at overall wellness emphases in our congregation, FPC obtained status as a Blue Zone Approved Organization in January of 2017.

2 We Keep Building

In 2017, the number of houses FPC members have been part of building through Habitat for Humanity climbed above 80!

3 New Men's Ministry

2017 introduced a revival of programs for men at FPC, starting with a retreat in January attended by 77 men. In addition, an average of 70 men now attend monthly men's morning breakfasts.

4 LWI Partnership Grows

FPC's partnership with Living Water International grew in 2017 with interest meetings and planning taking place for drilling water wells in Haiti.

5 Let Freedom Ring!

In July, FPC's handbell players joined other handbell choirs from Oklahoma and Texas in ringing the Star Spangled Banner during the Texas Rangers game!

6 Booming Summer!

There's nothing "off" about summers at FPC. Over 300 children, youth, and adults participated in more than a dozen camps, retreats, and mission trips/projects.

7 First Eco Camp

A new "green" summer camp was added in 2017. Eco Camp offered children from Grace Presbytery the chance to learn about the environment and God's creation.

8 Steeple Restoration

During the summer of 2017, FPC's original steeple was removed due to structural and aesthetic issues. A new, identical steeple was installed in August.

9 Dental Clinic Patients

The Salt and Light Dental Clinic that operates out of FPC's Community Crossroads outreach center at 1516 Hemphill saw a total of 271 patients in 2017!

10 Hurricane Response

In response to Hurricane Harvey and other storms that hit our region in early fall, you gave \$37,219 – so far! And, you gave 155 flood buckets (with help from other congregations) to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

11 Solar Under the Sun

In September, eight FPC folks attended Solar School to learn about future efforts with Solar Under the Sun that installs solar panels in underdeveloped areas.

12 Youth Fight Hunger

At their annual mission event on October 1, coinciding with World Communion Sunday, FPC's youth packed 25,056 meals for Kids Against Hunger.

13 EEC Accreditation

In the fall of 2017, FPC's Early Education Center did extensive work to apply for reaccreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This will now include our full time childcare program.

14 Great Choir Growth

The Chancel Choir saw huge growth in 2017, from 24 in 2016 to 42 by this fall!

15 Special Baptisms

In November, FPC pastor Robyn Michalove had the honor of baptizing longtime WOW attendee, Cindy, and 5 of her six daughters!

16 Plans for More Outreach

The 2017 Stewardship campaign introduced FPC's dreams of expanding the facilities and outreach opportunities housed at Community Crossroads in the next year.

17 New Way to Give

The Church Administration office launched ShelbyNext as a way to pay your pledge and give other special offerings online or through the ShelbyNext app.

God is good, all the time!

PASTORS' LETTER



Dear Friends,

I wonder, when Jesus defended the woman caught in adultery, if he was thinking of his mother.

That's what people had thought, after all – that Mary had stepped out on Joseph even before they had stepped into marriage. Joseph could righteously have stepped altogether out of the picture. He didn't. Instead, he stood by Mary, walked alongside Mary, walked all the way to Bethlehem, all the way to Egypt, all the way home.

Surely the adult Jesus knew the story, the whispers to which Mary had been subjected, the rumors Joseph had endured. "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

The night she beckoned him into the world, would Mary have foreseen the grace Jesus would bear to such scenes as that woman caught in adultery? We tend to encapsulate Christmas and incarnation within imagined pastoral pictures of freshly bathed shepherds and luminescent angels. The stars twinkle. The moon beams. The cattle moo but they do not stink.

Rubbish. Birth was not easy, especially in that day, especially away from home. Risk was involved, and fear enough to assault faith. Both fear and risk were endured by those two young parents. Mary and Joseph were nonetheless obedient to God despite being also and understandably full of questions about how they'd gotten themselves into all this.

Jesus' arrival is simultaneously the most comforting event in human history and also the most challenging. After all, we say we want God's presence, but into whose life does such light shine without revealing a flaw or two, or thirty? God's pure white light shines not only upon our path, upon our lane, but also our pain. Upon our sadness. Our disappointment. Our weakness. Our fear. Our failure.

By this time your Christmas arrangements are taking shape. Airplanes are landing. Family is arriving. The menu is set, recipes are ready, and the groceries shelved. Cards are mailed and your tree sparkles with memories and, if you're anything at all like everyone else – and you are – there are dents and scratches in your life, in your memory, in your family.

Here's the deal; Jesus comes into the world not to condemn it, but to save it. To save you. To save me.

Christmas isn't a sanctimonious game of pretend. It is a joyfully serious encounter with a swaddled God screeching to get our attention. And our obedience. And our participation.

May this Christmas leap from its domesticated box of decorations and leave a lump in your throat, and a sparkle in your eye, for God is with us. He has come not to throw stones. He has come to scatter grace.

See you in church,

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the February issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, January 17**. Submissions for the weekly Penn Street Online emailed newsletters are due the Wednesday prior to each week's issue.

Please send to Teresa Tysinger at ttysinger@fpcfw.org or bring by the church office.

FOLLOW US

Do you follow First Presbyterian on social media? If not, find us on the following sites and follow along for photos, reminders, encouragement, and more.



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PUBLISHER INFO

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Celebrating FPC Beacons Ministry



Here at First Presbyterian Church, we are grateful to have ministries dedicated to meet the needs of all ages. The Beacons Ministry aims to provide all persons 55 and over an opportunity for Christian fellowship, enrichment of the mind and spirit, and meaningful service in the congregation, community, and beyond; while offering mutual support for members of the group in order to provide them with enthusiasm and power for the tasks assigned. In short, the goal of the Beacons is to enrich the lives of mature Christians through fellowship, education, and service.

Celebrating 2017

In 2017, the Beacons Ministry offered monthly fellowship opportunities through its potlucks and Birthday Bashes. Donations collected throughout the year have gone to benefit outreach efforts such as Community Crossroads and the Menaul School in New Mexico. A highlight of the year was in September when 27 traveled together to visit the Bush Presidential Library in Dallas.

What's Coming Up in 2018

The Beacons Ministry extends a warm welcome to any and all members and friends of FPC 55 and older in the new year.

- Come celebrate those with birthdays at the **Birthday Bash** on the 3rd Thursday of each month at local restaurants.
- **Potlucks** are getting a refresh in 2018! Once a quarter, the Beacons will gather for a delicious meal that includes an entree prepared by FPC's Director of Food Service and Hospitality and tasty sides/desserts provided by YOU! Dates are March 28, June 27, September 26, and December 5. Relevant and interesting programs will continue, with some exciting additions. Stay tuned for more.
- Day Trips are being planned and will likely be held in the spring and fall. Details to come!
- Finally, the Beacons Executive Board is also welcoming interest this year from those wishing to bring their thoughts, energy, and ideas to the table! Contact Barbara Martin at charbar67@att.net to express your interest.



Bringing Light with Solar Under the Sun

New Covenant with Ministry that Aims to Alleviate Energy Poverty Around the World

The Session of FPC recently approved a covenant between our congregation and Solar Under the Sun (SUS), a ministry project of the Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Believing that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the vision of Solar Under the Sun is to alleviate energy poverty in partnership with volunteers and in-country partners.

In September of 2017, eight church members attended Solar School, the four-day intensive training at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center in Little Rock, Arkansas. The FPC team learned about field surveys, team leadership, and covenant partnership development as well as about installation, operation and maintenance of solar energy systems.

This January, four of the eight team members will travel to Cheridant, Haiti, for a site survey visit as they plan for an installation trip later this year. Our church will be installing a solar energy system for a recently constructed high school called St. Matthias. The 10-classroom facility is a project of the Haiti Education Foundation and was just built to replace the one destroyed in the 2010 earthquake.

Bringing light to the students and families at this school affects the quality of their education, health, and day-to-day activities. Please keep our team members in prayer as they travel on our behalf as together we engage in this exciting ministry of light and hope.

FPC Trip Participants: Jamie Downing, Cindy Hart, Ben Osborne, Ralph Reece

Adult Church School Classes

Alpha and Omega (60'-70's): Bible study led by John Thompson in Room 241

Bible in Depth: Bible study of Revelation led by the Rev. Dr. Betsy Pense (January/February only) in Room 237.

Boomers (50's-60's): Faith topics led by Rev. Dr. Betsy Pense (December) and Rev. Robyn Michalove (January) in Room 102.

Geneva (70's): Faith Topics led by Martha Zaborowski in January and February in Room 304.

Growing Families of Faith: Faith conversations coordinated by Thomas Parsons in Room 236.

Journeys: Book study coordinated by Ann Christian in Room 242.

Maj-Jo (seniors): Bible study led by Gordon Van Amburgh in Room 310.

Maranatha: Bible study led by Dr. Steve Brotherton in Room 239.

SYS (40's-50's): Faith conversations coordinated by Bill Goodwin in Stripling Conference Room.

Westminster (seniors): Study on Christian Worship by the Rev. Mona Bailey in Room 238.

YOMAC (seniors): Present Word Bible Study led by Martha Brooks and Sue Barham at Trinity Terrace.

Young Adults: Faith Conversations led by Eric Varnon in Room 240.

Young Families: Faith conversations coordinated by Michael Martin in Room 230.

BE INSPIRED...

Below are some upcoming opportunities for being inspired into a life of discipleship through church events in the coming weeks.

January Brunch

Join the FPC community for the next All-Church Brunch on Sunday, January 7. Cost is \$7 per person or \$25 family maximum. No reservation required. Watch for the menu to be posted in worship bulletins or in weekly emails. Thank you.

Bible in Depth

Beginning Sunday, January 7 and Wednesday, January 10, the Rev. Drs. Elizabeth (Betsy) Pense and Michael Waschevski will be leading Bible in Depth in a study of Revelation. Meeting on either Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. or Wednesday mornings at 10:45 a.m. in Room 237, Bible in Depth will read Revelation verse by verse and interpret the text paying close attention to its historical context. This fascinating, often misunderstood book, is a source of challenge, strength, and hope for the church today.

To register for this study email or call Celeste in the church office (cfalter@fpcfw.org or 817-335-1231 ext. 261).

Praying for 2018 Retreats

Please join us in praying for those attending two retreats early in the new year. The Men's Retreat is Friday, January 19 (optional night) through Sunday, January 21 in Grapevine. The Women's Retreat is February 10-11 in Granbury. May the time spent away for these retreats be great!

SHYC 2018

Senior High Youth, it's time to sign up for the Senior High Youth Connection (SHYC), in Sherman, TX on January 26-28. Watch for a mailing with full details then sign up!

Join an Adult Choir

The beginning of a the new year is a perfect time to join one of FPC's adult choirs! The Chancel Choir sings primarily for the 11 a.m. service and rehearses Wednesdays from 7-8:30 p.m. The Fellowship Choir sings primarily for the 9 a.m. service and rehearses Wednesdays from 6-7 p.m. (Child-care is provided during rehearsals.) The choirs will also combine for special services such as Kirkin' (the best seats in the sanctuary are in the Chancel!) and Ash Wednesday. The choirs look forward to welcoming new singers into this joyful ministry of FPC where music and fellowship combine each week to inspire singers and congregation alike. If you have any questions about the choirs, please contact Michael Waschevski in the church office.

PW's Tuesday Together

Tuesday, January 16 at 10:30 a.m.
Topic: "Like Mother, Like Daughter, Like Daughter"

It's 1937. Imagine a 24-year old woman boarding a Japanese freighter in San Diego, California for a month-long journey to Santiago, Chile, where she will be married. This was Pam Grossman's mother.

At the January Tuesday Together, Pam will share a few stories about her intrepid mother, and then about her own experiences as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic. Then Pam's daughter, Kristina, will tell us about her year working for International Justice Mission in Kampala, Uganda. The stories of these women will demonstrate how sometimes God's calling is "just in your blood!"

Please RSVP for this event (lunch \$7) with Celeste Falter in the church office at cfalter@fpcfw.org or 817-335-1231, ext. 261.

ENGAGE THE WORLD...

Below are some upcoming opportunities for engaging the world through church outreach mission efforts in the coming weeks.

MLK Day of Service

Joining up with national celebrations, this event on Monday, January 15 at 9 a.m. honors the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. People of all walks of life come together across Tarrant County to serve at more than 30 service sites.

This is an amazing event that you do not want to miss! Join us to make it a day on, not a day off. Learn more and register at <https://www.tarranttogether.org/>.

2018 Homeless Count

Once again, the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition (TCHC) will coordinate a point-in-time homeless count of our area for January 25, 2018 from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. These counts are large scale, community efforts to locate, count, and survey everyone who is experiencing homelessness at a particular point in time. The TCHC coordinates Count Night for Tarrant and Parker Counties and it takes over 500 volunteers to help pull it off!

Annual counts help TCHC and community leaders understand the changing trends, extent, and nature of homelessness in our community. The data is also used to measure the progress we are making in ending homelessness. Homeless counts take place across the United States during the last 10 days of January to provide the nation with comparative and longitudinal information on the nature and extent of homelessness. It is easiest to locate people who are homeless when it is cold, late at night, and at the end of the month.

Sign up to help and learn more at <http://ahomewithhope.org/> 2018-homeless-count/.



Christmas Boxes Due January 7

Families are reminded to return their filled "12 Days of Christmas" boxes to the church on January 7. Bring your box to the collection areas outside worship spaces, or the church office any time. Items in your boxes will benefit many touched by FPC's many outreach efforts.

Books Needed for FAD

Children's books, especially board books, are needed to hand out with Formula And Diaper (FAD) Ministry items. Books in both English and Spanish can be used. Please bring to the church office. Thank you!

Room in the Inn

Room in the Inn is a ministry of FPC that welcomes 14 men experiencing homelessness a warm, safe place to sleep and eat very Monday evening during the coldest months of the year. (A summer session is also held.) We especially need volunteers to visit with our guests and stay for dinner to extend hospitality. Several of the tasks are great for families to serve together. Learn more or sign up to help through Robyn Michalove at robynm@fpcf.org or 817-335-1231.

Being Kind: In-Kind Giving through FPC

The phrase "in-kind gifts" refers to a kind of charitable giving in which, instead of giving money to buy needed goods and services, the goods and services themselves are given. Below are several of the in-kind donations accepted at FPC throughout the year for a variety of the church's mission outreach efforts. Thank you for your generosity in 2018!

PEANUT BUTTER

Every 3rd Sunday of the month is Peanut Butter Sunday. Bring 15-16 ounce jars of peanut butter to church to help stock the shelves of the First HAND Food Pantry at Community Crossroads.

FORMULA AND DIAPERS

The Formula and Diapers Ministry (FAD) operates out of Community Crossroads on the 3rd Wednesday of each month and provides these items to mothers and children in need. All sizes of diapers and powdered formula (Similac Advance Stage 1 Formula) are appreciated.

FOOD & CLOTHING

The First HAND Food Pantry always needs non-perishable food items for grocery bags given to clients. The Clothing Room takes ready to wear, seasonal clothing and shoes that are gently worn or new. Clients are served on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Donations can be left in collection bins throughout the church or at the following times at Community Crossroads (1516 Hemphill Street):

Mondays, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Wednesdays/Thursdays, 8:30-11 a.m.

Wednesdays/Thursdays, 1:30-3 p.m.

Please watch for other opportunities for in-kind gifts throughout the year that benefit special projects. If you have questions, please contact Robyn Michalove in the church office.

Book People Book Club

Book People, a book club for First Presbyterian members and friends, will begin its fourth year of meetings and discussions on February 12, 2018. The group meets on the second Monday eight months of the year from 12 noon to 1 p.m. in Room 304. New members are always welcome. Below are the four spring books - each a love story of one kind or another.

February 12: *Skeleton in a Dead Space* by Judy Alter

This is a love affair with family, job, and place - set right in the Fairmount area of Fort Worth.

March 12: *A Reliable Wife* by Robert Goolrick

This is a cold love story featuring not very likable people, but with amazing writing and a grace-filled ending.

April 9: *Someplace Familiar* by Teresa Tysinger

Teresa is the Director of Communications at First Presbyterian and this is her first novel. She will join us for our discussion. Books will be available for \$12 at our February and March meetings.

May 14: *Any Dream Will Do* by Debbie Macomber

In Macomber's new story, Shay has loved her brother deeply but it almost ruined her life. Can she find new loves and a future for herself?

Books are available in bookstores and libraries, from Amazon in print and electronic, and most also in audio. If you have questions, please contact Elizabeth Johnson Pense at ejpense@me.com.



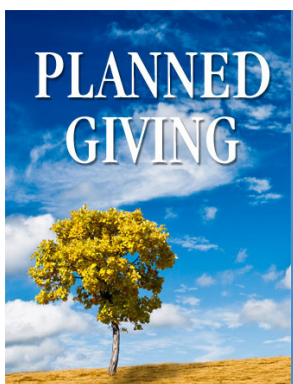
We'd like to extend a special thank you to the many volunteers who helped make the **Christmas Toy Store** on December 9 a huge success. Your gifts of toys and your time are greatly appreciated!



At the **Young Adults Winter Gathering** on December 9, a bunch of our young adults enjoyed painting Christmas projects with Heidi from Art & Soul.

New Member & Visitor Dessert Gathering

The next Dessert Gathering for new members and visitors will be Tuesday, February 6 at 7 p.m. in the Parlor. These informal gatherings give you the opportunity to learn more about ministries and mission at FPC and meet with pastors and staff. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Martha Zaborowski, Discipleship Coordinator, at marthaz@fpcfw.org or 817-335-1231. This event is happily sponsored by the Evangelism Committee.



PLANNED GIVING

A donation to the **West Maintenance Fund** will provide income to support the maintenance of our church buildings as they age.

If you have questions about Planned Giving, contact Dana Fickling in the Church Administration Office (dfickling@fpcfw.org or 817-335-1231).



Congratulations to the three women honored with Life Membership at the Presbyterian Women's Celebration of Christmas worship service on Tuesday, December 12: **Jackie Melcher**, **Merilys Corning**, and **Elizabeth Carlock**

JOYS & CONCERNS

Following are the joys and concerns shared as of December 14, 2017 (due to printing deadlines). To respect the privacy of those listed, names are included only when the individuals grant their permission.

Our loving sympathy to...

Bill and Jane Rhule on the death of his aunt, Jeane Rhule on December 9 in Kansas City. Other FPC family includes **Rebecca Rhule** and **Jason and Cindy Hermus** and their children **Olivia** and **Sarah**.

Family and friends of **Raymond Scott**, who died on December 4. Raymond is survived by his wife, **Dalia Scott**.

Family and friends of **Ray Brown**, who died on December 5.

John and Mary Jane Witt on the death of her sister, Margaret McCormick on December 2 in Kansas City.

Family and friends of **Ruth Storms**, who died on November 26. Ruth is survived by sister-in-law, **Joyce Storms**.

Family and friends of **Jack Cameron**, who died November 23.

Cliff Frederick on the death of his mother, Peggy Andrews, who died November 22 in Tucson, Arizona.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Marjorie Gordon, Rosanne Almy, Merilys Corning, Marilyn Wilson, Rush Hart, Donald Deshauters, and Lisa Priddy, who are recovering from surgery or injury. **Vera Kendall, Dwight Mason, Phyllis Propes, Emma Coley, Marjorie Lewis, Rev. Floyd Kinser, Dorothy Kinser, Indi Butler, Nona Cobden, David Nation, Corinna Nation, Lisa Shiner, Jacquitta White, Marge Shiner, Elizabeth Bean, Frances Blake, Gene James, Carolyn Lischio, Mac McCoy, Nancy Nelson, Ed Martin, and Dalia Scott**, who are dealing with illness or undergoing treatment. **Jane Watson**, who is on hospice.

Our caring prayers for extended family include...

Jim Corning (brother of **Bruce Corning**), Don Laminack (brother of **Vance Laminack**), Warren Brown (son-in-law of **Betty Tefft**), Bess Hunt (mother of **Martha Zaborowski**), Evan Wilson (grandson of **Henrietta Bailey**), Glenda Burger (sister of **Vance Laminack**), Janet Laminack (cousin of **Julie Sphar and Vance Laminack**), John DeMore (son-in-law of **June Sprott**), Lisa Koenig (niece of **Clark Williams**), Kathy Kline (**Maxine Kruse's** daughter), Marty Kinard (**Larry and Bettye Kinard's** daughter-in-law), Mark Bryant (**Joanne Sarsgard's** son), and Susan Chenault (**Frances Chenault's** daughter).

Prayers for peace in our world, for the safety of Nathan Gunter (**Russell and Vivian Norment's** nephew) who is stationed in Korea. Also for the safety of **Diego A. Saldivar**, who is serving in the US Navy; Diego is the son of **Becky and Rene Saldivar**.

Our congratulations and best wishes to...

Ryan and **Sarah Barrera**, who were married on December 2 in our sanctuary. Sarah is the daughter of **Barry and Evie Richardson**.

Andrew and **Siobhan Beaty** on the birth of a daughter, Caroline Drew Beaty, on November 20. She joins big sister Irelyn. Proud grandparents are **Jim and Claudia Duff**.



CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Below are some **highlights** of special events happening in January. For a complete calendar, visit fpcf.org.

SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

- 8 a.m. Worship in Chapel
- 9 a.m. Worship in Great Hall
- 10 a.m. Church School for All Ages
- 11 a.m. Worship in Sanctuary

WEDNESDAYS IN JANUARY

- 5:30 p.m. Dinner & Worship on Wednesdays at Community Crossroads

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

- 10 a.m. Bible in Depth Sunday Study Begins
- 11 a.m. All-Church Brunch (2nd seating at 12 p.m.)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10

- 10:45 a.m. Bible in Depth Wednesday Study Begins

MONDAY, JANUARY 15

- 9 a.m. MLK Day of Service

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16

- 10:30 a.m. Presbyterian Women's Tuesday Together

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

- 7 a.m. Men's Monthly Breakfast

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JANUARY 19-21

- Men's Retreat in Grapevine

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

- All Day Peanut Butter Sunday (donations collected)
- 6:30 p.m. Taize Worship in Chapel

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

- 7 p.m. Homeless Count



THE
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LETTER

First Presbyterian Church
1000 Penn Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102

PERIODICALS

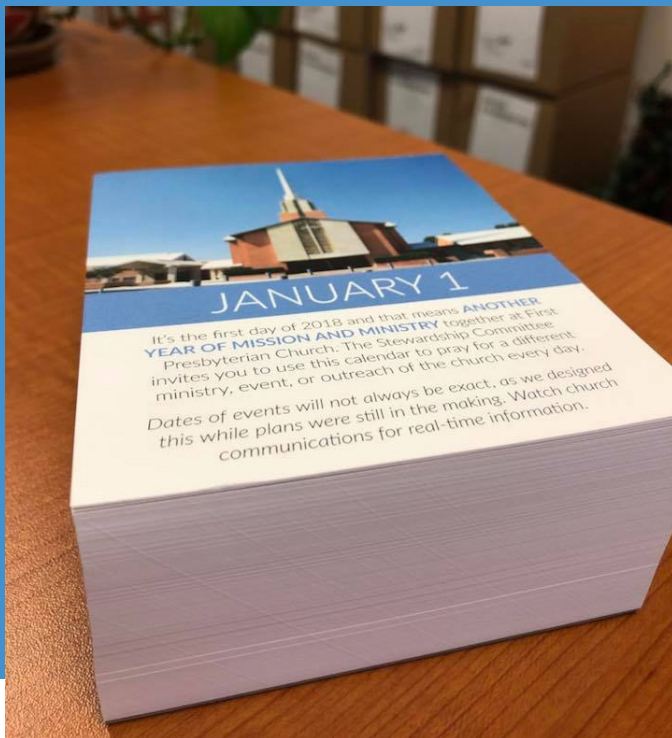
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365 DAYS, 365 BLESSINGS!



2018 FPC DESK CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE!

Once again, we're offering a custom 365-day tear-off calendar to use during the year. At work or at home, these calendars provide daily reminders about FPC ministries and missions. Join the FPC community in praying for these many ways we are inspired into growing discipleship and encouraged to engage the world in our local circles and beyond. Happy New Year!

If you've not already done so, pick up your household's calendar on Sundays in early January or from the church office during regular weekday hours.

Calendars are courtesy of the Stewardship Committee.