



The Messenger

(DECEMBER 2023)

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PASTOR:
REV. MARI LYN
JONES

MINISTERS:
THE CONGREGATION

SESSION MEMBERS:
PAT REHM -
Clerk of Session
JEANETTE WEST -
Worship
DEBBY ALDRIDGE
Personnel/Finance
MIKE HART -
Education
SHAY VANWINKLE -
Fellowship
MIKE HART -
Benevolence/Outreach
RANDY KEMP
Building & Grounds

TREASURER:
PAT HART

ORGANIST:
JEANETTE WEST

CHOIR DIRECTOR:
SHAY VANWINKLE

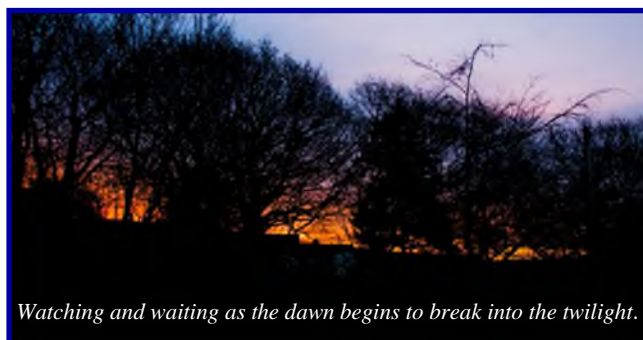
**COMMUNICATIONS &
MESSENGER EDITOR**
#138 PETE STEBBINS

* ARTICLES NEED TO
BE SUBMITTED TO
PETE BY THE LAST
SUNDAY OF THE
MONTH - FOR THE
NEXT MONTH'S
PUBLICATION.

On the Journey with Pastor Mari Lyn Advent



When we first returned to central Texas from Missouri, I rose early each morning and slipped out to our patio where I would sip my coffee while watching the sky turn from dark to twilight to the beginnings of dawn. Listening to the wind and watching the twinkling stars slowly disappear, I would sit and wait for the morning. In the silence, I would listen for God. This psalm often came to mind. *"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word, I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning."* (Psalm 130: 5 - 6 New Revised Standard Version)



We are approaching the Season of Advent, the beginning of the church year. Traditionally, this season is a time of waiting. We wait for the coming of the Christ: Christ the Child, Christ the Savior, Christ the King. We wait in hope for the *already* remembering the birth of the baby in whose life we would come to more fully know God. We wait in hope for the *already*—the One through whose parables and prayers, healings and restorations, self-sacrifice, and resurrection we experience saving grace. We wait in hope for the *not yet*—Christ's return so that God's will is fully realized on earth as it is in heaven. Advent is the season when we wait: remembering the ancient story and looking forward to the promised future. We watch and wait for the LORD; our souls wait for the LORD, resting on God's Word.

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Calendar of Events

Sunday Worship Services at 10:00 am

Adult Sunday School at 9:00 am

Men's Prayer Breakfast Tues, 8 am

Choir Practice Wednesdays, 4:00 pm

Chair Yoga Tuesdays and Thursdays

- Dec. 17 - Session Meeting after Worship
- Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6:00 PM
- Dec. 25 - Christmas Day with Family
- Dec. 31 - New Year's Eve

DECEMBER 2023						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Candle Light Service	25 Christ- Mas Day	26	27	28	29	30
31 New Yr's Eve						Happy New Year!

THE JOURNEY CONTINUED.

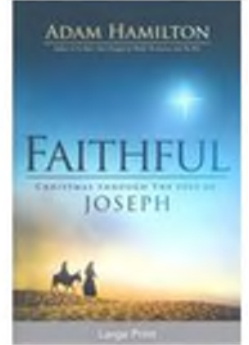
Storytelling is a great way to wait. We tell stories around the campfire as we wait for the night to settle in and our bodies and minds to wind down. We tell stories at holiday gatherings while we wait for the turkey to finish roasting or while we wait for full tummies to make room for dessert. This Advent, as we wait for the coming of the Christ who is the fulfillment of God’s promises—as we wait to retell the story of Christ’s birth—I invite you to recall and to tell the stories of God’s promises fulfilled in your life. This Advent, while we wait for the **coming** of the Christ—Christ the Child, Christ the Savior, Christ the King—I invite you to recall and to tell the story of your own **coming**—coming into this community of faith. I would be honored if you shared these stories with me, for our stories are knit together into the tapestry of God’s story.

This Advent, as we wait for the coming of the Christ, may we look towards our own **becoming**—becoming the people God calls us to be. May these words reflect our Advent experience: *I hope, LORD. My whole being hopes, and I wait for God's promise. My whole being waits for my Lord—more than the night watch waits for morning; yes, more than the night watch waits for morning!* (Psalm 130: 5 - 6 Common English Bible)



Adult Sunday School

On Sunday, December 3rd, Shirley Pinkston will return to her teaching duties to lead the Sunday School class through an Advent study of Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph by Adam Hamilton. This study will last 4 weeks, ending on Christmas Eve, December 24.



There will be no class on December 31 but we will distribute a new book for a 6 week study in January and February, God Never Gives Up on You by Max Lucado, led by Mike Hart. Please join us from 9:00 to 9:45 for coffee and fellowship.

Advent Worship by Mari Lyn

In worship during Advent, we will set out *On the Way to Bethlehem*. The sermons will help us reflect on who accompanies us along the way and how they might shape our preparation for the coming of the Christ.

We are *On the Way to Bethlehem*

- Dec. 3—with the Prophets (*readings from 2 Samuel & Isaiah*)
- Dec.10—with Mary (*readings from Luke 1*) ;
- Dec.17—with Joseph (*readings from Matthew 1*);
- Dec.24—with angels (*readings from Luke 1 and 2*).

Dec. Birthdays



Debby Aldridge	4
Betty Gengler	9
Lilly Kerr	12
Sandie Klingberg	21
Gidget Todd	31

About our Members



Lillian Marie “Lilree” Jackson passed away peacefully November 22. Her Service to the Witness of the Resurrection will be in our church building Saturday, December 9 at 3 pm with a bereavement meal following. Prayers for peace and comfort for her family.

Prayers for healing:

- for back and leg pain Bob Todd
- for cancer Susan Carroll, and
- for Joan Ray’s sister, Jean.

Prayers for recovery:

- for Rip Van Winkle recovering from

gall bladder surgery in November

- for Pete Stebbins recovering from skin graft surgery in November

Continued prayers for recovery:

- for Pat Rehm who fell and broke her shoulder in October;
- for Brad Rehm recovering from knee surgery in September, and
- for Renita Menyhert recovering from her double knee surgery in August.

A reminder that:

Missie Lanham comes to Salado a couple of Saturdays a month. If you would like to visit with her here, please call her daughter, Claire at 254-931-0596 to schedule a visit.

Church

Notices



REMINDER: All giving to be included in your 2023 Tax Statement needs to be **in the church office no later than December 28, 2023**. If a check arrives in the mail after that date, it will be too late to be included in your 2023 statement.

We have had a good return on pledge letters but there are still about 20% of the congregation who have not returned them. Please send them in regardless of the late date. We are trying to put together the budget for 2024. **NOTE:** The Pledge Form is included as the last page of this Messenger.

To keep up with what is happening in our presbytery, you can subscribe to the bi-monthly Grace Presbytery electronic email.

Go to <https://www.gracepresbytery.org> (Ctrl/Click)

Scroll to the bottom of the webpage where you will find a form where you give your name, email address, and click on subscribe. Every other week, you'll receive the Grace Newsletter in your email inbox—from "Grace Presbytery Communications."

Mary's Story

Every year as Christmas approaches, my thoughts turn to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her story ever beckons to me.

As I imagine it, I see Mary, the young maiden, olive skinned, a covering over her long, dark hair, about thirteen years old, newly metamorphosed into womanhood. And I picture Joseph, a tall, handsome young man, likely in his late teens, yet old enough to choose a wife.

I see their families sharing the Sabbath meal together, the candles lit, the ancient words of the ritual being repeated. And Mary's mother, perhaps, as she sees the richly colored garment worn by Joseph's mother, and the fine table that is set before them, growing excited for her daughter's prospects, pleased that a young man from such a family, a descendant of David, is interested in her daughter.

And I envision the fathers, in the cool of the evening, moving out into the courtyard after dinner, to discuss the betrothal, and the eventual marriage of their children. Perhaps the talk turns to the grandchildren that they may one day share which brings a smile of anticipation to their faces.

The happy couple, so young, so innocent, so caught up in the joy and the passion of youth, the excitement of planning their wedding day, and the life they will soon share, seem

blissfully unaware of the turmoil that lies ahead of them.

But then, "The Annunciation!" In the book of Luke, Chapter 1:26-29, we read: "Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city in Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of



David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one; the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of message this might be."

The angel Gabriel then proclaimed that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and she would bear a child, to be called Jesus, the son of the living God, the long promised and long-awaited Savior of Israel.

And her response to all this? This virgin, who had never lain with a man, this newly betrothed, barely past childhood, young woman?

Her response, "The Magnificat," as we know it, is found in Luke 1:46-55. It says, in part: "My soul magnifies the Lord; and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, because He has regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth our generation shall call me blessed, because He who is mighty has done great things for me; and holy is His name."

Such faith! Such trust! Such unquestioning obedience to God's call on her life. Such rejoicing!

It is hard for us to fathom. And yet, we accept it as fact, and we believe it is true. For we, as Christians, know the rest of the story. And we know too that it is not yet finished. And soon we, like Mary, like the angels in Heaven, and the Wise Men of old, will be celebrating Jesus' birth.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and he shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6).



Wishing you a Merry Christmas from "A Merry Heart." *Linda Lloyd*

Presbyterian Church of Salado - Congregational Meeting

Congregational Meeting Summary Sunday, November 5, 2023 - Sanctuary

The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. Mari Lyn Jones at 11:03 AM.

Nancy Norris was elected as secretary to take minutes for this meeting due to the injury of Pat Rehm, Clerk of the Session. The motion was passed, and Nancy reported that a quorum was present.

New Business - Three items from the Nominating Committee by were presented by Chair Debby Aldridge, Laquita Arner, and Sara Pettijohn, as well as a Proposed 2024 Church Budget by Treasurer Pat Hart:

Laquita Arner presented Chris Gengler and Denise Kemp to serve as Elders for the Session's Class of 2026.



Sara Pettijohn then presented nominee Evelyn Matthews to complete the unexpired term for the Class of 2024 of Shay Van Winkle, who has had to resign her term on the Session.

Sara Pettijohn also presented the proposed slate of At-Large members to the Nominating Committee as Ann Faber and Cindy Pennington. All proposed nominations from Nominating Committee were passed.

Treasurer Pat Hart presented a Proposed 2024 Budget Forecast of income of \$108,140 and expenses totaling \$107,820. Copies were distributed to the congregation, and she explained the budget forecast.

Pat also distributed pledge sheets to the congregation and requested that they be returned to the church by November 30, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 11:20 AM.

🎵 Musical Notes 🎵

With the beginning of Advent on this 1st Sunday in December, and leading up to Christmas Day, we will be singing a variety of Advent hymns and Christmas carols which are oftentimes sung only once or twice during this season. Thus, since it has been a year since most of these have been sung, they may seem new and not as familiar to you. Rest assured the message of waiting for Christ's birth proclaimed by the prophets and our current waiting for our Lord to call us home or His glorious return will be communicated through our music in worship.

Our congregation will have the opportunity to sing a special Advent candle lighting hymn each Sunday communicating Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. This hymn is entitled, "We Lift the Light of Hope." The words, or lyrics, will be sung to "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name." Though this hymn has several different melodies, we will be singing it to the tune, CORONATION, with which we are most familiar.

In addition, the lyrics to the Doxology by Thomas Ken were written in 1674, and have definitely stood the test of time. How exciting it has been to find different Advent hymns and Christmas carols to which these familiar words may be sung during this special season of the year. This will give us the opportunity to add a "breath of fresh air" to the familiar lyrics of praise to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit we always include in our worship.

Merry Christmas & God's Blessings! *Jeanette West*

Worship Committee

* **Sign up lists for 2024** will be in the Narthex starting this Sunday for Greeters/Ushers, Liturgists, and those wanting to provide flowers for the Sanctuary to honor a family member or special occasion.



* **December 31, 2023, will be our next 5th Sunday** worship. With this being New Year's Eve, what a great opportunity for us to celebrate in singing the Christmas Carol hymns we love so well and reflect on the Christmas scriptures and story of Christ's birth. Maybe you or your family member would like to present a Christmas carol musical special with voice or instrument. Another possibility could be to share a religious Christmas poem or unique family tradition which would coordinate with our scriptures and prayers that morning. Please contact Jeanette West, Worship committee chairman, if you would like to participate in the worship service that morning.

The "Hanging of the Greens" Social - November 26



The November Social was focused on decorating for Advent plus enjoying Chili and one of the many Soups!



2024 Pledge

If you haven't turned in your 2024 Pledge yet, the session would appreciate it if you would.

Presbyterian Church of Salado Pledge for 2024

As a part of my/our commitment to the Presbyterian Church of Salado and my/our belief that "the great end of the church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the kingdom of Heaven to the World,";

I/we pledge to:

_____ pray regularly

_____ attend worship regularly

_____ work in and through my/our church

_____ give \$_____ weekly, monthly, annually for operational expenses.

Name (s): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please return to:
(or put in collection plate)

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