



The Messenger

“Lord, as your blessings flow to me, may they continue to flow through me, for the good and encouragement of others.”

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

Carl's Comments - Reverend Carl Thompson

As I sit here at home, in front of my fireplace, on this last week of 2022, I can't believe that I will be starting my nineteenth year as your Pastor. When I first arrived here in 2005 my plan was to spend three years, and then completely retire and spend my days working in my garden and reading. I ran into a detour to my plans: it was the congregation of the Salado Presbyterian Church. Evelyn and I have made so many wonderful friends here. This congregation is made up of loving, caring, energetic Christians who put their faith into practice. Your love is evident to all who visit and worship with you. Thanks for the last 18 years.



I want to wish all of you a very happy New Year. As I look back on 2022, we had a good year with our budget once again, and we were able to close out the year giving 24% of all offerings for benevolence giving. Not many churches can say that they give away 24% of their income. I say to each of you, "well done my good and faithful servants".



There are many churches today that are "out to lunch" when it comes to reaching out to change the world for Christ. But fortunately, there are many other churches and many church members who are seeking to do the best they can to make a difference in the world. I think we, as a church, and you, as members, are on the right path. Paul gives us specific directions for living each day. Paul says in Philippians, "Forgetting what lies behind, I strain forward to what is ahead." We should be looking forward to what is ahead in this New Year.

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Calendar of Events

- Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m.
- Communion on First Sunday each mo.
- Adult Sunday School at 9:00 a.m.
- Men's Prayer Breakfast Tues. @ 8 am.
- Chair Yoga 1pm Tues and 10:30am Thurs
- Choir Practice Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m.
- Jan. 1 - New Year's Day
- Jan. 19 - Woman's Devotional 11:30 am
- Jan. 29 - Congregational Meeting after Worship plus Covered Dish Social

January 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Carl's Comments Continued

In 2023 we can make a fresh start, forgetting the things that may have been holding us back in the past. Our God is not a God of the past, but of the future. Our God is the One who says again and again, "Behold, I am doing a new thing." "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold everything is new!" I am sure of this: whatever is hurting us, whatever is holding us back, whatever is keeping us from the fullest possible experience of life; God wants to gather it up. God will do that if we let Him.



The year 2023 is a blank piece of paper, and we can color on it any way we wish. Christians have good reason to be the most joyful people in the world. Their happiness is not based upon the condition of the world but upon the condition of their heart. So, take the 8760 hours you have before you in 2023 and enjoy life knowing that God truly loves you.

There are changes coming for the church and Evelyn and I in 2023. I know that the Holy Spirit will lead us through the transition of the pastoral leadership in our church and will provide the right person to serve God and lead God's people in our church in 2023. God is in control.

Happy New Year, Carl and Evelyn



Common Lectionary Readings (Carl will change topics at times due to requests - especially in the Summer)

	New Year's Day - Jan. 1	Baptism of the Lord - Jan. 8	2nd Sunday after the Epiphany - Jan. 15	3rd Sunday after the Epiphany - Jan. 22	4th Sunday after the Epiphany - Jan. 29
1st Reading	Ecclesiastes 3:1-13	Isaiah 42:1-9	Isaiah 49:1-7	Isaiah 9:1-4	Micah 6:1-8
Psalm	Psalm 8	Psalm 29	Psalm 40:1-11	Psalm 27:1, 4-9	Psalm 15
2nd Reading	Revelation 21:1-6a	Acts 10:34-43	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Gospel	Matthew 25:31-46	Matthew 3:13-17	John 1:29-42	Matthew 4:12-23	Matthew 5:1-12

Jan. Birthdays



- Chine Ray 8
- Missie Lanham 12
- John Pettijohn 18
- Jim Arner 23
- Shay VanWinkle 29

About Our Members (and Prayer Requests)

Jim Arner has some medical issues beyond his regular good and bad days. Pray that treatment via medicines goes well and other procedures are not required.

Shirley Pinkston has a very close friend that has a 3year old grandchild that is having severe medical issues. Please pray for the doctors, healing and peace for the parents, grandparents, and friends.

Carl Thompson has good and not so good days. He still has doctor visits and tests scheduled that will take time to get results. Please pray for healing, strength, and much wisdom for his doctors.

Thanks to **Missie Lanham** for the wonderful jars of classic cranberry sauce.

Some of my (Pete) meaningful verses:

[Phil 4:4-7](#)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be **anxious** about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[Rom 8:28](#)

28 And we know that **in all things God works for the good of those who love him**, who have been called according to his purpose.

[Ps 94:19](#)

19 When **anxiety** was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.

THE GOD WHO HEARS ME

Have you ever wondered if God really hears you? Has that thought ever crossed your mind? Well, I, for one, am convinced that he does. There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever. So, if you have doubts, let me tell you about my Christmas Eve.

Ralph and I had our Christmas Eve all planned. We were going to San Antonio on Christmas Eve day to visit his brother and sister-in-law, see their new house, celebrate Christmas with his whole family, and return home the day after Christmas. We had made hotel reservations for ourselves and a nephew coming in from Kansas. Unfortunately, Ralph's brother had a serious medical emergency and was hospitalized for a few days. Thus, they were unable to host the family Christmas this year. The nephew opted to remain in Kansas due to weather. "So, that was not going to happen."

Since we were going to remain in Killeen, we made plans with my daughter and son-in-law to join them at my granddaughter's house on Christmas Eve. As bad luck would have it, my granddaughter's children all got the flu just prior to Christmas Eve. "So, that was not going to happen."

Just a few weeks ago, Jeanette, our choir director, asked if I would be singing with the choir on Christmas or Christmas Eve. I gave her a definite "No" and said that I would be in San Antonio. I also made the comment that I would love to sing "Mary Did You Know?" at some future date. A couple of weeks later she checked with me again about my plans for the holidays and I responded that I would be gone. At choir practice last Wednesday, I wished everyone a "Merry Christmas" and said that I would not be singing with them during the Christmas holidays. However, once again, "So, that was not going to happen".

Since all our plans for Christmas Eve had fallen through, we were able to come to church. I was so happy. I love the candlelight service, but usually miss it because we are out of town.

People were surprised to see me when I showed up in the choir room. But not nearly as surprised as I was when, about ten minutes before the service, I was informed that Rip, our scheduled soloist, had laryngitis. "So, that was not going to happen".

And guess what? He planned to sing "Mary, Did You Know"? If you were at church that night, you already know the rest of this story.



Yes, I agreed to sing it, despite the fact that I haven't sung it in a very long time, never in church, hadn't practiced at all, and wasn't sure if I remembered all the words.

So, it's a definite "Yes." "Yes", the Almighty hears us. He hears every word that we utter. He hears and knows every desire of our hearts, spoken or unspoken. And only God could have known how I would really spend my Christmas Eve.

Isaiah 65:24: Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear. (ESV)

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year,
from a Merry Heart, *Linda Lloyd*

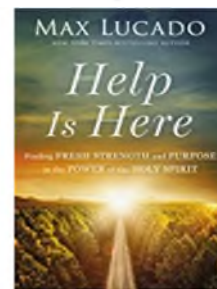
Musical Notes

Since September, when our Adult Choir started back after their summer break, what a blessing and joy it has been to sing familiar hymns and learn new ones as well! It is amazing what messages are in the words which make up the verses, or stanzas, of our hymns. By paying attention to their message anew, our hearts and minds can be rejuvenated to joy and praise in singing. What a positive message of hope as we move into the new year! Thank you, God, for already going before us into 2023!

Sharing in Christ's Service,
Jeanette West

Adult Bible Study

On January 1, books and reading assignments will be distributed in class for our next Bible study. We begin an in-depth study of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives: [Help Is Here](#) by Max Lucado.



We will review the many ways God's Holy Spirit helps us to live out our faith. The study will review the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding us and giving us peace and strength, and being our intercessor, friend, and advocate. We will discover ways the Holy Spirit brings joy to our lives as we serve our Savior. Join us for this important study, on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. You will also enjoy fellowship, coffee, and cookies. I hope to see you there.

Shirley Pinkston

Woman's Devotional -12/15

The Church Women will meet on Thursday, January 19th. The group will gather in the classroom after chair yoga about 11:30 AM for a social time and BYO Lunch, and the devotional will begin at Noon. Please feel free to join us for a pleasant exchange of ideas.

Session Meeting Minutes from December 11 - Pat Rehm

Presbyterian Church of Salado Stated Session Meeting Notes- Dec. 11 from 11:07am to 12:25pm

Present: Moderator, Rev. Carl Thompson; Clerk, Pat Rehm; Treasurer, Pat Hart; Ruling Elders: Randy Kemp, Debby Aldridge, Mike Hart, Jeanette West; Communications, Pete Stebbins.

Clerk 's Report - Pat Rehm

The annual update of the Church Rolls was started using a list of inactive members, and it will be completed after December 31st. One local family will be contacted, but others who have moved away will be removed. January 29, 2023 was selected as the date for the next congregational meeting, when annual reports from Elders will summarize highlights of this year.

Treasurer's Report - Pat Hart

In November the totals for income were \$6,135 and expenses were \$6,904, leaving a deficit for the month of \$509. Year to date, however, our income is \$27,359 ahead of expenses, with \$20,000 of that money invested in our Vanguard money market account. Educational funds remain adequate to purchase books needed through June.

Worship - Jeanette West

The Choir is now practicing at 3:30 PM on Wednesdays. Greeters are needed for this month, as well as Communion servers for January and succeeding months. The organ's switch needs repair. Communion dates were approved to continue the 1st Sunday of each month, plus having the Maundy Thursday service on April 6.

Education - Mike Hart

The Women's Devotional group has met since the summer Bible study ended in early September, and it will continue on the 3rd Thursday each month at 11:30 AM in the classroom. The Sunday School Class has completed Tom Berlin's *Courage* and has started Adam Hamilton's *Prepare the Way for the Lord*, an Advent study. The Men's Tuesday Prayer Breakfast group has finished the Book of Matthew and will read Adam Hamilton's *Incarnation* through Advent.

Building and Grounds - Randy Kemp

We are paying higher utility rates than our prior contract designated, and insurance costs have also increased. The new budget for 2023 allows for these adjustments. There were no significant repairs required in 2022, but the following projects were completed: AC Filters were replaced in June and December; the exterior lock at the fellowship access was repaired; and the light ballast in the Sunday School room was replaced. Major roof repairs are anticipated in 2023, as well as replacement of the exterior door in the Sunday School room.

Fellowship - Pastor Carl reporting for Shay VanWinkle There will be a social gathering after the Congregational Meeting on January 29, a 5th Sunday.

Communications - Pete Stebbins

He has now completed 128 *Messengers* going back to 2012. Plus he sends limited congregational updates, which are approved by Pastor Carl.

Benevolence - Mike Hart

The total disbursement for the 4th quarter (October – December) is \$5,440. Since Heart & Hands Ministries has become an independent 501 (c) (3) organization, it can no longer function through the First Baptist Church. So it has requested that the locally supportive churches donate monthly to its outreach activities. Our benevolence committee will have to decide whether to add a monetary donation to our current cost of providing bread for the pantry distributions (about \$100 a month). In January, this committee will have its first face-to-face meeting since COVID-19 restrictions started.

Personnel/Finance - Debby Aldridge

Pastor Carl's contract for 2023 has been approved, as it will remain the same until his retirement at the end of June. It has been submitted to Grace Presbytery. When people ask her about how the search for a new pastor is proceeding, she tells them that our Session is following the Presbytery's recommended procedure. A document from Presbytery to initiate a formal search will be submitted before the end of the year. She suggested that Randy Kemp serve as chairman of the Pastoral Search Committee, as he has had past experience in that role. He agreed to take that position.

Final 2023 Budget - Pat Hart

She passed out a report with three columns, showing the 2022 Budget, the 2022 Forecast, and the Preliminary 2023 Budget. The 3rd column had total income for 2023 at \$130,120 and expenses at \$123,260, leaving a net income of \$6,860. She cited a future increase in our phone bill, which changed the total expenses to \$123,452, making the net income \$6,668. Then Randy explained that expected roof repairs will require \$6,500 more in 2023. This additional item would change the net income to \$168.

After the Session's vote to approve the Final 2023 Budget, Pastor Carl Thompson said that part of the Memorial Fund can be used to pay for the roof, and that we have been looking for such a worthy project. The motion to approve the payment of this expense with restricted funds was passed. At the Congregational Meeting on January 29th, this transaction will appear as an expense under Building and Grounds on the 2023 Budget and as a withdrawal from restricted funds on the Balance Sheet.

Submitted by Pat Rehm, Clerk

Update on Benevolence - Mike Hart

We distributed \$5440 during the 4th quarter and our total annual distribution was \$26,160 which is 24% of our annual offerings.

December 24 - Christmas Eve Service



The Thompson/Carlson families light the advent candles.

The Christmas candlelight service is a great reminder about the true central focus of Christmas. This service is to help us celebrate the birth of the savior of the world - the light of the world - thus the candle.



CHOIR CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our Adult Choir concluded their last choir practice of 2022 on 12/21, with a fun-filled Christmas Party! A delicious variety of finger food snacks were provided by the members. There was great conversation, laughs galore, and a uniquely unexpected gift swap, which proved to be extremely entertaining, to say the least. Wish you could have been there? You are more than welcome to come to our next party! The only catch is, it will be announced at a future choir practice on Wednesday afternoons, 3:30-4:30, starting 1/4/2023!



New Year Sign-Up Opportunities!

It's a New Year! This means each of us as a part of our church family has the opportunity to share in the following areas of worship service preparation and/or enhancement:

- 1. Greeters/Assist with Offering** - begin (about 9:40 a.m.) welcoming all persons who come to worship with a smile, pleasant greeting, and the choice of large- or regular-print bulletin. Assist with taking the offering except for the 1st of the month when the elders, serving communion, will also assist with the offering.
- 2. Liturgist** - Assists in reading the Prayers and Scriptures, which are part of the worship liturgy used during the worship service.
- 3. Provide Flowers** - You may sign up to provide flowers for a particular Sunday to remember, honor, or celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, or other suitable occasions. The providers may use flowers from their garden or purchase plants or arrangements. The flowers may be brought Sunday morning as you come to church.

If you have any questions regarding any of these opportunities, please contact Jeanette West/ Worship Committee, or Pastor Carl. New sign-up lists will be available in the foyer beginning January 1 for 2023. Thank you for your willingness to share in our ministry and worship.