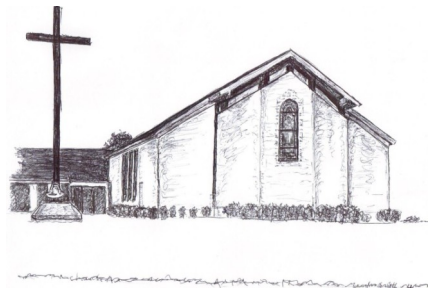


# Presby News

December 2017



## FROM THE PASTOR . . .

It is pretty difficult to even think of Christmas without at the same time thinking about giving, don't you think? The two just go together. And especially when we speak about Christmas from our faith perspective. For **Christmas for believers has its origin in the greatest gift of all time--the giving of God's Son for our salvation!**

So, in our giving, as in every area of our lives, maybe we should pay more attention to practicing this grace **after the example** of God's giving of "the unspeakable gift."

The first thing about God's giving which we should imitate is to **let love be the motive for our giving.** "For God so loved the world that he gave . . .". It was His unconditional love which prompted the giving of His Son. And when we give at our best, we do so mainly because of love.

We are all such imperfect creatures. **And so often, we give out of mixed motives**, such as peer pressure and social expectations. Maybe this Christmas, we can ask the Lord to help us do whatever giving we do to be based more on love than anything else.

A second thing about God's giving worthy of our imitating is giving a **gift that will bring special joy to the recipient of the gift.** When God gave His Son, He knew how much joy and peace it would bring to the human heart to have a Savior--one who could bring forgiveness of sin and the reality of eternal life. What present could match this?

Unfortunately, when we give, we sometimes overlook what might bring the person to whom we are giving great joy and happiness. In fact, we might in some kind of selfish and unconscious way be thinking about what would make us happy. Our focus needs to be upon the likes and dislikes of the person receiving the gift. **What will bring them joy?**

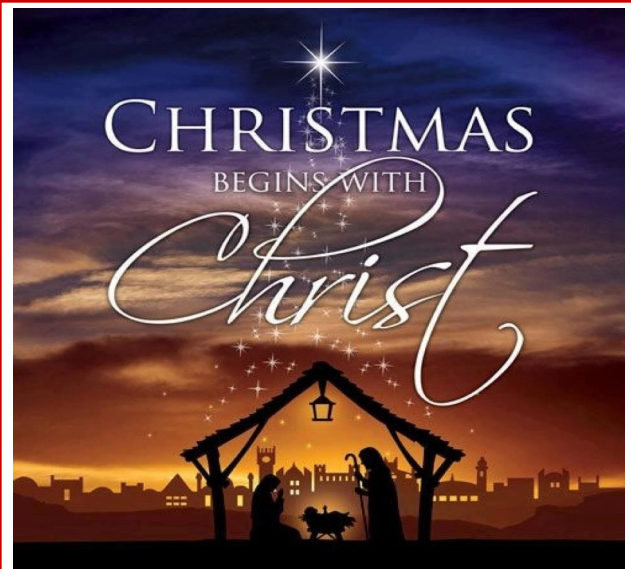
A third thing about God's giving we need to imitate is **the non-reciprocal nature of His giving.** God did not give His Son thinking: "Now, I am giving my son sacrificially only provided that you people down there on earth return your love to me in a similar manner." No! No! No!

God does not give in that way. God gives simply because He is the essence of love and He freely gives of Himself whether we respond positively or not. He would like for us to respond by saying yes to Him and loving Him in return. But **His giving does not depend upon our positive response.**

In a similar way, we must learn to increasingly give to God and others **without expecting anything in return.** When we do so, our loving and our giving is more Godlike and more reflective of the lifestyle of Jesus while He was on this earth.

May the giving that all of us do this Christmas be a little more like our Heavenly Father's!

Jim



SPECIAL DATES	
December 3	Second Sunday of Advent Brookdale Worship Communion ( <i>Every First Sunday</i> ) Christmas Dinner After Worship
December 17	Joy Gift Offering 5:00 pm Christmas Concert & Reception Following
December 18	6:00 pm Session Meeting
December 19	5:00 pm Healthworx Meal
December 24	No Morning Worship 5:00 pm Candlelight Service
December 25	Merry Christmas ( <i>Office Closed</i> )
December 31	New Year's Eve (Regular Service)



**Minutes of Stated Session Meeting**  
**First Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, Louisiana**  
**October 16, 2017**

The Session met in the church library, 357 Windermere Boulevard, Alexandria, Louisiana. Jim Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and opened with prayer.

Members Present: Annelize Benade, Bill Higgins, Jim Hockensmith, Elizebette Kennedy  
Treasurer: None  
Elders Excused: None  
Guests Present: Jim Heath, Pastor  
A quorum was present.

**Finance Report:**

The financial statements for September, 2017, were distributed to the Session. The September, 2017 bank statements were reviewed and initialed by Session members.

**Motion:** That the Session approve the September, 2017 Financial Reports.  
Moved: Bill Higgins                      Seconded: Jim Hockensmith  
Motion: Carried

**Approval of Minutes:**

The Session reviewed the minutes for the Stated Meeting of the Session for August 21, 2017. One correction was made as follows: Elizebette Kennedy was inaccurately listed as excused, but she was in attendance and took the minutes of the meeting.

**Motion:** That the Session approve the minutes for the Stated Meeting of the Session for August 21, 2017, as corrected.  
Moved: Bill Higgins                      Seconded: Jim Hockensmith  
Motion: Carried

**Clerk's Report:** None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SESSION ACTIONS:**

**Congregational Life/Christian Education, Evangelism, Worship & Missions Committee Report: Jim Hockensmith**  
**Stewardship Campaign 2018:**

Jim Hockensmith reported that it is time to begin the yearly Stewardship Campaign. The deadline for sending the stewardship letters and pledge cards is early November. Elizebette Kennedy agreed to write the letter, and she will send it to Jim Hockensmith for amendments and final approval.

**Christmas Poinsettias:**

The Session members agreed by common consent that the Christmas Poinsettia inserts will need to be placed in the bulletins starting mid-November with orders and payment to be turned in by November 26. The poinsettias should be placed in the church by the first Sunday in December (December 3).

**Christmas Tree:**

The Session members agreed by common consent that the Christmas tree will be put up after the November 19, 2017 morning worship service.

**Christmas Eve Service:**

Because Christmas Eve falls on Sunday, the Session discussed having the Christmas Eve Service on Sunday morning, rather than the usual morning worship service.

**Motion:** That on Sunday, December 24, 2017, the Session approved having the Christmas Eve Service only, replacing the Sunday morning worship service.  
Moved: Jim Hockensmith                      Seconded: Bill Higgins  
Motion: Carried

**Christmas Choir Concert:**

The Session discussed scheduling the Christmas Choir Concert on Sunday, December 10, during the morning worship service. Jim Hockensmith will make arrangements with Music Director Aaron Rogers. The budget for the concert was set between \$1,000 to 1,200.

**Motion:** That the Christmas Choir Concert (Contata) be held on Sunday, December 10.  
Moved: Jim Hockensmith                      Seconded: Annelize Benade  
Motion: Carried

**Motion:** That the Session approve moving the First Sunday of Advent to Sunday, November 26, 2017.

Moved: Jim Hockensmith                      Seconded: Annelize Benade  
Motion: Carried

**Lighting of the Advent Candles:**

The Lighting of the Advent Candles will also start on November 26, 2017. The church needs to invest in a good lighter and a box of matches for the candles. The Advent candles have been checked, and they are in order.

**Christmas Banquet:**

Dr. Jim Heath reminded the Session that the church will be planning a Christmas meal during December. He reported that he will plan the details with the Pastor's Advisory Committee.

**Personnel Committee Report: By Bill Higgins**

Aaron Rogers is still looking for a replacement pianist for DeAnna Brister.

**Property Committee Report: By Jim Hockensmith**

- Phillips Sign Company has been called to repair the rails that hold the letters on the front sign.
- Jim Hockensmith will follow up about contacting someone about repairing damage to the church roof. The insurance deductible is \$1,000, so if the cost is less than the deductible, it will be out of pocket.

**Motion:** That the Session approve that Jim Hockensmith follow up with enlisting someone to repair the roof, noting that if the cost is less than the \$1,000 insurance deductible, it will be out of pocket.  
Moved: Annelize Benade                      Seconded: Jim Hockensmith  
Motion: Carried

**Pastor's/Moderator Report: Dr. Jim Heath**

- Dr. Heath thanked the Session for their service and the recent salary increase.
- He reported that he recently spoke to Greg Carroll, the interim pastor at Woodland Presbyterian Church, Pineville, and he invited them to the Christmas Choir Concert (Contata).
- Dr. Heath presented the idea of purchasing an electronic sign for the church. The Session members felt it would cost too much (\$20,000 plus). At this time, the Session felt it would be better stewardship to continue using the current sign. The Session agreed to allow Dr. Heath to get an estimate for a small electronic sign.
- LSU boxes did well in the beginning. A renewed effort will be started around Christmas/New Year in preparation for the new semester international students.
- Discussed Dr. Heath's role as pastor and fulfilling the mission of the church.
- Discussed use of more lay readers and welcomed members of the congregation to serve as readers.

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

The Session reviewed a letter from the Ugandan Kids Choir stating that they would be on tour in the Alexandria, Louisiana area in December. They asked if they could perform at First Presbyterian on December 20, 2017. The Session members decided that the Choir would not get the necessary support at this time, it would be too costly, and the December 20th date falls on a Wednesday.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** That the Session Meeting be adjourned.  
Moved: Jim Hockensmith                      Seconded: Elizebette Kennedy  
Motion: Carried

The Stated Meeting of the Session adjourned at 7:00 pm with a closing prayer by Dr. Jim Heath. There will be no Session Meeting in November. The next Stated Meeting of the Session will be held at 6:00 p.m., Monday, December 18, 2017. The Session will conduct business through email until the December meeting.

Respectfully submitted:  
Minutes taken by: Elizebette Kennedy  
/cs

# December Responders Schedule

	Usher Narthex	Monitor	Communion Servers
<b>December 3</b>	Robert Kennedy	Jim Hockensmith	<b>Elder Liturgist:</b> Elizebette Kennedy <b>Communion Team:</b> Annelize & Dirk Benade
<b>December 10</b>	Annelize & Dirk Benade	Dirk Benade	
<b>December 17</b>	Robert Kennedy Elizebette Kennedy	Bill Higgins (May-Oct) Roger Best (Oct-May)	
<b>December 24</b>	Jim Hockensmith Robert Kennedy	Jim Smolenski	
<b>December 31</b>	Robert Kennedy	Bill Higgins	



*Anniversaries  
and Birthdays*

Charles Ellington	12/03
Georgia McBurney	12/06
Bill Higgins	12/08
DeAnna Brister	12/12
Dee Brister	12/14
Gil & Dee Arnold	12/18
Brandi Woolam	12/19
Laverne Willson	12/22
Roger Best	12/23
Waylon Smith	12/24
Helen McDaniel	12/30

**Thank you to the members of the Choir who helped with the Christmas Decorations:  
Sean Grady, Hannah Noel Johnson, Ashleigh Pope, Laura and Theresa Sharp,  
BobbiMaria Cameron, and, Director Aaron Rogers.**



**We appreciate all you do for FPC!**



## **First Presbyterian Church**

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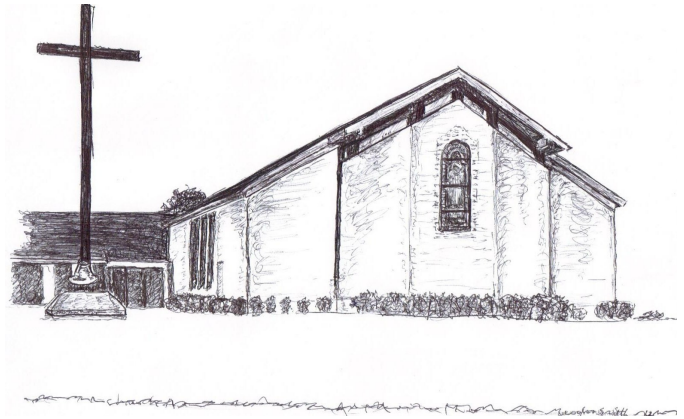
Jim Heath, *Stated Supply Pastor*

Aaron Rogers, *Choir Director*

DeAnna Brister, *Pianist*

Carolyn Sterne, *Secretary*

Charles Bell, *Sexton*



### ***WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE***

4:00 pm Prayer Service

First Presbyterian Church

357 Windermere Blvd.

Alexandria, LA 71303

**Come experience God's love at First Presbyterian Church**

Sunday School—9:45 a.m., Worship—11:00 a.m.