

Original artwork by Megan

Dear Church Family,

God is using you to make the world a better place. Your love and care for those within our congregation is evident. You show your love by spending time with and listening to each other as you share of yourselves through the grace of God. You give your energy and attention to the workings of the church, the church building and especially to your brothers and sisters in Christ. But not only do you share with each other, you also share with the community. Those who are in need in Jacksonville know they are cared for by our church because you give of yourself and your possessions. As you seek first the kingdom of God you are making a difference. Thank you for your loving hearts! -Mary Jane



An introduction from the Sanctified Art Creative Team:

Advent is a season of endings and beginnings. As the calendar year comes to a close, a new church year begins. Christ's birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving: and yet, the world as we know it spins madly on. When we navigate seasons filled with endings and beginnings, we need reminders. We need words that can feel like steady ground, like a path for our feet to find as we step forward into the unknown.

We have crafted an Advent series filled with blessings, with the words we need to hear again and again as we begin a new season: *you are a blessing; we can't go alone; do the good that is your to do; hope is worth the risk; love knows your name; don't forget to laugh; the road isn't straight.* (On the following page are the themes and icons for each week during Advent. These will also be displayed in the sanctuary.) These reminders root us in the fundamental truths of our faith.

As you journey through this season, may you find words for belovedness and hope. May you find words for beginning again. For no matter what you are facing, no matter what this new day brings, love is your beginning.

ICON KEY FOR WEEKLY QUILT SQUARES



YOU ARE A BLESSING This quilt square is a simplified abstract image of the angel Gabriel who tells Mary she is "blessed among women."



WE CAN'T GO ALONE This quilt square design is called a "log cabin", and is meant to symbolize that together we can hold one another up and make something greater.



DO THE GOOD THAT IS YOURS TO DO We are each uniquely gifted, called, and equipped for the good that is ours to do in the world. In the center is the cross, symbolizing Christ's impact, and surrounding it are individuals reaching out and shining their particular light in the world.



HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK This traditional quilt square design is called "birds in the air." Sometimes when we take a risk, hope takes flight. At times it may feel like you're falling, but you'll find that, in God's embrace, you are flying.



LOVE KNOWS YOUR NAME The love of God is represented by a heart with three triangles that seem to fold inward, ready for embrace..



DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH From a center point, tulip-like flowers stretch and bloom, referencing the Ralph Waldo Emerson quote, "The Earth laughs in flowers."



THE ROAD ISN'T STRAIGHT The triangles in this quilt square point in multiple directions. Much like the magi's journey, the path that lies ahead isn't always clear or straight. Thankfully, we have the guidance of the Spirit to light our way.

Perla will graduate with a Public Accounting Degree on November 29.
Congratulations, Perla!

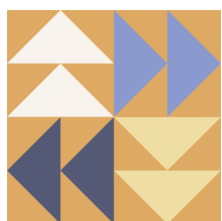
Jacelynn has been accepted to the University of Arkansas and also into their School of Architecture. She will begin in the fall of 2025.
Congratulations, Jacelynn!

Session Report

The session met after church on November 24. Rosemary was present to state that she would like to become a member. The session joyfully approved her membership. The Annual Congregational Meeting was set for January 12, 2025. The annual report of the church will be reviewed at this meeting. Another congregational meeting was set for December 8 to present the nominees for the new class of elders to the congregation for approval. The finance committee reported that Perla would be willing to serve as treasurer, so a motion was made and seconded to accept her as treasurer and it was approved by consensus. She will begin after the first of the year. Mary Jane proposed establishing a creative team that will use their talents in all facets of the church, pointing out that we have a wide variety of talented individuals that might enjoy sharing their talents. A motion was made to create the team and it was also approved by consensus. The next stated meeting of session was set for December 29.

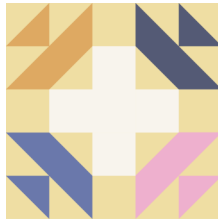
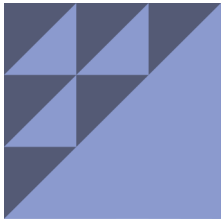
Mitten Tree

During December we will be collecting gloves, mittens, scarves and underwear to adorn our mitten tree.



Then they will be given away to help keep everyone warm this winter.

Potluck Pictures



A Note from Mary Lee

Mary Lee, a follower of Jesus who is the Christ who brings us salvation and everlasting life. To God's beloved at First Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, Christ Jesus our Lord, and the Holy Spirit.

I give God thanks for you and for your steadfast trust in God's peace and grace as you continue serving our community as Matthews 25 directs. And I give God thanks for your continuing support of me as I step out in faith in God's providence and take classes at Austin (Texas) Presbyterian Theological Seminary toward a Certificate in Ministry.

Your thoughtful and generous gift of The Westminster Study Bible has overwhelmed me. I am so incredibly grateful for this addition to my study books. This wonderful tool will help me as I move through the upcoming future courses at seminary. Thank you.

I continue to pray for our church and for your wellbeing as we continue to serve our community. May the God of love and peace and joy bless you as you continue in your learning and praising for our great Lord who rejoices in your commitment to God's word.*

-Mary Lee

*Written in the style of correspondence of the first century CE (as I learned in the New Testament course through Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary).

Summer Interns

Our church will host two interns from the University of the Ozarks next summer (June and July). They will be joining us in worship and in all of our activities. They will also provide help with the missions of our church.

These young people will become a part of our church family while they are here. We will have opportunities to get to know them, and make a difference in their lives, as I'm sure they will make a difference in ours. Be on the lookout for more information in the coming months about this exciting opportunity!

*Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
December 24 at 6:30*



November Report from the Community Care Room

In the month of November, we gave members of our community:

- 12 pairs of shoes
- 39 hygiene packs/individual items
- 53 MREs (Meals Ready to Eat that contain enough nutrition for an adult for one day)
- 5 bags/backpacks
- 54 pairs of pants and 90 shirts
- 18 blankets, sheets, or other bedding
- 119 pieces of clothing such as socks or underwear
- 198 snack bags
- 11 hats and gloves
- 15 jackets or coats



Thank you for giving to this ministry—your donations make a difference!

Attendance for November

Nov. 3: 31

Nov. 10: 25

Nov. 17: 37

Nov. 24: 35

Preachers and Scriptures for December

Theme: Words for the Beginning

Dec. 1	Mary Jane	Luke 1:26-38	Isaiah 43:1-7
		<i>You Are a Blessing</i>	
Dec. 8	Elizabeth	Ruth 1	Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
		<i>We Can't Go Alone</i>	
Dec. 15	Rev. Michael	Luke 3:7-16	Isaiah 58:9b-12
		<i>Do the Good that is Yours to Do</i>	
Dec. 22	Elizabeth	Matthew 1:18-25	Luke 1:46-55
		<i>Hope is Worth the Risk</i>	
Dec. 24	Mary Jane	Luke 2:1-20	Isaiah 9:6
		<i>Love Knows Your Name</i>	
Dec. 29	Mary Jane	Luke 2:10,	Matt.2:10 Isaiah 9:2-3
		<i>Don't Forget to Laugh (Healing Service)</i>	
Jan. 5	Mary Jane	Matthew 2:1-12	Isaiah 43:16-21
		<i>The Road Isn't Straight</i>	<i>Epiphany</i>

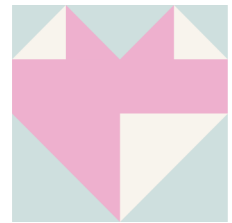
Announcements

The Mission and Outreach Committee ordered business cards for our church. Pick some up to give to neighbors and friends.

Our next Hospitality Time will be **December 1**. We will gather after the worship service in the Hospitality Room to enjoy snacks and a time of visiting together.

We will fill snack bags after the worship service on **December 8**. The items needed are...

- Bottled water
- Tuna kits or chicken salad kits, or canned Vienna sausages
- Granola bars
- Fruit bars (like Nutrigrain bars)
- Peanut butter crackers or cheese crackers
- Fruit snacks



December 15 will be our **Community Potluck**. Let's bring a dish or two to share with our church family and our neighbors in our community. Barbara has prepared gift bags for all the children who come. We will also have a time to create quilt squares that will go along with our series: Words for the Beginning.

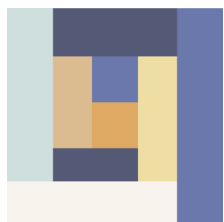
The **Bible Study** Group meets on Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

The Ladies Circle will meet **December 17** at 10:00 am. This month we will be preparing Christmas cards and having a cookie swap. Come and enjoy this festive event.

Please consider signing up on the tablet in the west lobby to help clean the church one weekend this month. We can do it if we all pitch in!

The Community Care Room could use donations of new or used shirts, jeans, and coats or jackets for the colder months. Also, we always need bottled water.

We are developing a FPC Creative Team. If you are interested in helping or have ideas of projects that could be done, contact Katie or Mary Jane.



Since the colder weather may at some time necessitate opening the warming center, we would like to form a Warming Center Task Force. The Task Force would share the responsibilities of securing volunteers and supplies, as well as making social media posts and contacting community organizations. If you feel called to help on the Task Force, please contact Karen.

Prayer Requests from November

Ami
Ann and family
Barbara
Cheryl
Beth
Billie Ann
The B family
Cheryl
Chris and Elba
Diane
Dianne
Family of Dixie
Duke
Greg and Ann
Hannah and family
The H family
Isabella
Jason
Jeannie
Jessica
Katina
Kimberly
Larry
Laura
Lauren
Louise
Lynette
Michael
The N family
Pat
Rodney
Tara
Toni
First responders
The leaders of our city, state,
and nation
Students, teachers, and school staff
People affected by natural disasters

Advent Photo-a-Day Challenge

For each day of Advent, A Sanctified Art encourages users to take a photo inspired by the word of the day. You can send your daily photos to the church email, or share them on social media with the words that inspired them! You can find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/fpcjax/> and on Instagram @firstpresbyjax

- 1: Begin
- 2: Bless
- 3: Courage
- 4: Possibility
- 5: Remember
- 6: Marvel
- 7: Go
- 8: Together
- 9: Embrace
- 10: Journey
- 11: Peacemaker
- 12: Connection
- 13: Enough
- 14: Goodness
- 15: Worthy
- 16: Repair
- 17: Magnify
- 18: Mercy
- 19: Dream
- 20: Hope
- 21: Risk
- 22: Grace
- 23: Joy
- 24: Love
- 25: Amazement

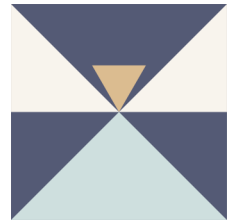


Nothing Can Separate
Us From the Love of God
Romans 8:31-39

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[https://
www.facebook.com/fpcjax/
firstpresjax.com](https://www.facebook.com/fpcjax/)

*May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands
stretch out your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart
open your heart to love.
And as you leave this place, may you see the face
of Christ on everyone you meet, and may everyone you meet
see the face of Christ on you.*



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If you are receiving this newsletter by mistake or would rather get one at the church in person, please let us know. If you know of someone who would like to receive this newsletter in the mail, please call us at 501-982-2876. God Bless You!