

*the* **LANTEARN**



First Presbyterian Church, Las Cruces, NM

December 2007



## A Difference that Matters

Every time that we baptize a child in this church, one of the elders always asks the congregation to make a vow along with the other vows of the parents. Together, right in front of God and everybody, we all make a solemn promise. *“Do you the members of the Church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture this child, by word and deed, to love and pray for, encouraging this child to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of his Church?”* “We do!”

So how are we doing at faithfully fulfilling this very important oath? As parents, grandparents and as a church, how are we helping educate and nurture faith in the children whom God has entrusted to us? What are we doing to teach and demonstrate to them that they are loved and uniquely blessed by God? Are they experiencing God’s mercy and grace as a part of their lives and spiritual development? What have our children learned about prayer and worship? Have they known and felt the hope and abiding presence of God for themselves? Which of the great Bible stories or parables of Jesus do they know and love best?

Our children are often beginning to learn their ABC’s by age two. Many can count to one hundred by the time they are four, and they can probably outscore us by millions of points on their favorite video game. However, what do they know of Abraham, Moses, Solomon, Peter, Andrew, John Calvin or Martin Luther? Do they know about Joseph and Mary? Do they understand why there are no elves in the Nativity set? What do our children believe and understand about the difference between Santa Claus and Jesus Christ?

Let me suggest, and I challenge you to ask your child or grandchild to retell the Christmas story in as much detail as they can remember --- and be warned. What you hear may come as a shock. The story that you hear may well involve the Grinch, maybe a snowman, or elves and reindeer. However, how could our children learn what Christmas is really about if they are primarily influenced by our culture and Christmas specials on TV?

From Thanksgiving on, the airwaves and TV stations are filled with Holiday Music, very little of which includes church music. Instead of Christmas Programs at school, we have Winter Concerts. Many of our children and youth do not know enough of the Christmas hymns to go caroling without song sheets. If we are not deliberate in teaching our faith through Christmas carols and hymns, how will we pass on that great heritage to the next generation? If we do not specifically teach our children and raise their awareness, how will we counteract the selfishness and greed promoted by the materialism and consumerism involved in the marketing of Christmas to children?

We first acquire our knowledge of God from the environment in which we are raised. We receive our religious inheritance from both home and church, against the deceptions lived and taught within and by our culture. Our principal religious tutor is a loving and faithful family, and our church has vowed to support them as the extended family of God. Our challenge and primary task is the spiritual formation of those whom God has entrusted to this congregation. The Advent/Christmas season is an ideal opportunity for meaningful Christian education.

The first and most important thing we can do to prepare our children for Advent is to prepare ourselves first. After all, if we are impatient and crabby - pressured by all the busyness of this season - we will not be very good at teaching our children anything about quiet, expectant waiting. If they do not hear us talk about our faith, our hope and our walk with the Lord, then how will they learn? In addition, if they only hear "the coming of Jesus" talked about at church, but never hear us talk about the meaning of the coming of Jesus for us, what is the message we are giving them?

There are many opportunities for us to teach and foster faith in our children during Advent and Christmas. When Christmas cards arrive, talk to your children about the difference between a secular perspective and those, which reflect the true meaning of Christmas, the coming of Christ. When you hear Christmas music, have a conversation about those with biblical themes and those, which do not. When you watch TV, help your children by discussing examples of how the world misunderstands what Christmas is truly intended to celebrate. We can look for opportunities to talk about what Christmas and our traditions mean to us and to our family. We can look for new and meaningful ways to focus on the true meaning of Christmas -- the reason for the celebration -- His birth. Sometime during Advent we can set aside some time for reading together as a family the true and real Christmas story from Matthew 1:18-2:23 and Luke 1:5-2:52. A Christmas of Santa Claus or Jesus Christ, it is a difference that truly matters. May our children be nurtured within a godly environment and one that reflects God's own steadfast loving kindness and gracious purpose.

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." (Isaiah 60:1-3)

## **PW Synod of the Southwest Gathering 2007**

One hundred twenty-five women attended the recent gathering October 26-28, 2007 in Mesa, Arizona. The theme for the gathering "Telling the Story" was used throughout the program. Ann Blakely, Sue Ann Hanning, Janet McPherson and Judy Kemper were in attendance from Las Cruces. The Synod of the Southwest includes the presbyteries of Sierra Blanca, Santa Fe, Grand Canyon and de Cristo. The worship services with sermons by the Rev. Sue Keim, Associate Pastor, Mesa Presbyterian Church, were moving as she told her stories with scripture. One guest speaker, Marcia Z. Nelson, a religious writer and teacher shared her story and highlights from her interesting book, "The Gospel According to Oprah." A panel with four Church wide Coordinator Team members led by Ann Ferguson, Program Coordinator from Louisville, Ky., used the theme "where have we been and what is our story." There were many workshop opportunities on Saturday. Evening and Sunday morning worship services were inspiring with songs and sermons.

Ann Blakely and Judy Kemper will be participating in the U.S.A. Mission Experience "Beyond Borders" in El Paso TX and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Your support of their

participation will be greatly appreciated.

New officers were elected with Ann Blakely as Moderator and Sue Ann Hanning, member-at-large, Justice and Peace. The next Gathering will be in Tucson in 2010.

## Iglesia del Pueblo's First Baptism

On Sunday, November 11, First Presbyterian Church invited the small congregation of Iglesia del Pueblo to join together for worship and the Sacrament of Baptism for Aileen Cecilia Sanchez, the daughter of Claudia and Orlando Sanchez. It was a beautiful occasion when the body of Christ was seen as a wide community in which different cultures and languages were experienced as one.

Over a year ago, as the result of a trusting relationship built in an English as a Second Language class at Dona Ana Community College where Pastor Hawkins teaches, Claudia and her husband Orlando became organizing members of the new Iglesia del Pueblo congregation. Orlando soon became the keyboard player for morning worship services. His parents, although living in El Paso, also feel very much a part of this ministry.

Waiting in the wings, there are two more families needing the warmth of a worshipping community where they can raise their children and experience the beauty of the Sacrament of Baptism. Step by step, this new ministry unfolds, and new cooperative ministries emerge with First Presbyterian Church.

Keep us all in your prayers, and give thanks for God's blessing.



Aileen Cecilia Sanchez, the daughter of Claudia and Orlando Sanchez and God-Parents, Adrian and Ruth Martinez

# BEYOND OUR WALLS

December 2007 Missions Bulletin of First Presbyterian Church, Vol. 9, No.9

## RICARDO AND REYNA GREEN

We are often surprised at the people whom God chooses to do His work. That is certainly the case with Ricardo Green, who, along with his wife Reyna, are our Missionaries of the Month. We have been helping to support Ricardo and Reyna since 1999. The Greens recently ended their ten year mission to Brazil and are now living temporarily in Decatur, Georgia.

Ricardo was born and raised in Honduras, one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere. When he was 18 and just out of high school, he sneaked across the Rio Grande with several of his friends in July 1979 and ended up in Los Angeles. That's right -- Ricardo was an illegal. In his own words, he did it simply out of curiosity. He wanted to see what it was like on this side of the border. And of the 22 Hondurans who attempted the crossing with Ricardo, only eight made it safely.

Ricardo got a job in a tortilla factory in Los Angeles -- certainly an inauspicious start for a missionary. But about ten months later, his boss introduced Ricardo to the Bible and started telling him about Jesus Christ. Ricardo was eventually born again. He resumed his education, eventually earning a B.A. in philosophy and religion at the University of La Verne in California and two Masters degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary. In 1986, he married Reyna, who was also from Ricardo's village in Honduras. Prior to immigrating to California, Reyna had earned a degree in teaching and had taught for a while in Tegucigalpa, the capital city of Honduras. The Greens now have two daughters, Kerry and Ashley, and a son, Richard.

After graduating from Princeton and being ordained as a Presbyterian minister, Ricardo was a pastor at three new Hispanic churches in New Jersey and one in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In 1999, he received a call from the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil to become a teacher at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Fortaleza, Brazil. Fortaleza is in the heart of the Brazilian northeast -- the most poverty-stricken area of the country. The entire northeast is often plagued by drought, and there is little employment. Consequently, most northeasterners leave the region if they can. This was a major problem which Ricardo and the seminary in Fortaleza faced even with the seminary graduates -- after graduating, few wanted to remain in the area, despite the dire spiritual needs of the people there.

Ricardo accepted the call, which required both him and Reyna to learn Portuguese. In addition to his teaching duties at the seminary, Ricardo also preached at different churches in Fortaleza on Sundays, helped a number of Brazilian Presbyterians to establish and strengthen new churches in outlying areas and worked with young narcotics addicts in rehab. By 2004, Ricardo had become a member of the ministry committee of the Presbytery of Ceara. In addition, he and Reyna both led various Bible study groups at different times during their stay in Brazil.

In August 2007, Ricardo wrote to us that he and Reyna had terminated their missionary service in Brazil, effective June 30. The Greens have returned to the U.S. and are now living temporarily in Decatur, Georgia. Ricardo is seeking a position as a pastor in the U.S., possibly to a Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking congregation. In his letter, Ricardo warmly thanked First Presbyterian Church for our support of his ministry in Brazil. The Greens would welcome correspondence, so if you wish to contact them, you may write to them at Mission Haven, 167 Inman Drive, Decatur, GA 30030, or send them an e-mail at [bgreenrich2@aol.com](mailto:bgreenrich2@aol.com) . He also asked for our prayers as he and his family face the difficult challenges of changing careers and readjusting to life in the U.S. after being away for ten years.

"Well done, good and faithful servants!"

(For a summary of just one of the projects with which he was involved, follow the link below.  
[http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/greenr/greenr\\_0603.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/greenr/greenr_0603.htm))



Ricardo Green (fourth from right) with friends in front of the new church development in Jardim Iracema

## **Presbyterian Women Local Mission For December**

Cristo Rey Outreach, Inc. is a Presbyterian Church-sponsored community development organization. It is located in Sunland Park, New Mexico, a border community with poverty levels more than triple the national average.

Cristo Rey Outreach, Inc. operates a community center known as La Casita in the neighborhood of Anapra. Since 1999 the center has provided a safe place for children in this community to develop their full academic and leadership potential. Through the hard work and dedication of local volunteers, La Casita has grown to embrace a variety of activities. Some of them are:

- “After School Tutoring” provides a nutritious snack, help with homework, safe recreational activities, for school age children.
- “Planting Project” teaches about nature through gardening. Children take part in growing plants to be sold at the local farmers’ market.
- “Clean-Up Project” Neighborhood kids want Anapra to become one of the cleanest places in the whole world. In yards and on the streets, they are sweeping up debris and garbage to create a sense of neighborhood pride.
- “Summer Lunch” provides a hot lunch to kids while they are out of school, a vital nutritional supplement for local children. As well, the program provides wholesome activities in a safe place.

This is an opportunity for us to help by supplying some materials needed for their summer program.

- Nonperishable snacks
- Multipurpose paper for indoor activities, etc.
- \$20 will buy nutritious snacks for 20 children on a daily basis
- \$35 will give a needy child one backpack full of school supplies

Gifts can be placed in the Local Missions box in Jones Hall, or you can make a monetary donation through our church.

## **In-Betweeners’ Christmas Dinner**

On Friday evening, December 14, the In-Betweeners will have its annual Christmas dinner. Small groups will assemble in hosts’ homes for a main-course meal for which the guests provide side dishes. Then all will gather in Watkins Hall at the church at 8:00 pm for dessert, caroling and other Christmas festivities. People are welcome to bring gifts for women and children at La Casa (bring either unwrapped gifts or wrapped with notes as to contents, age, and gender). Or people can bring blankets for Casa de Peregrinos (these blankets are in addition to those being collected each Sunday for the Gospel Rescue Mission).

If you would like to come to this event, let us know by Sunday, December 9. We hope you will come, especially if you are new in the church or have not participated in the In-Betweeners before. It’s a great way to meet other people in the congregation. All adult members of the congregation are welcome.



**COME CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS**

**AT**

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**December 9<sup>th</sup>**

10:30am- "Simple Gifts of Christmas"

A children's Christmas Pageant

**December 15<sup>th</sup>**

6:00-8:00pm "A Night In Bethlehem"

A hands on community Christmas event.

**December 16<sup>th</sup>**

10:30am "A Christmas Cantata"

First Presbyterian Church Choir with an orchestral accompaniment.

**December 23<sup>rd</sup>**

9:00am "All age Sunday School"










Join us for Christmas activities, carols, and cinnamon rolls.

**December 24<sup>th</sup>**

7:00pm "Christmas Eve Candlelight Service"





DECEMBER 2007						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>25</p> <p>9:00 AM Sunday School for Preschool-Adult</p> <p>9:15 AM Spanish Worship</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship Service</p> <p>12:15 PM Sermon Discussion</p> <p>4:00 PM AA Meeting for Women</p>	<p>26</p> <p>1:30 PM Choir Room in use</p> <p>7:00 PM Bells of Praise</p>	<p>27</p> <p>6:30 PM "Night in Bethlehem"</p> <p>Planning Team</p> <p>6:30 PM Boy/Cub Scouts</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilting Group</p> <p>4:00 PM Salt &amp; Light</p> <p>5:00 PM How to Read &amp; Study the Bible</p> <p>6:00 PM Dinner (\$3.00)</p> <p>6:15 PM Chancel Choir</p>	<p>29</p> <p>11:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>2:00 PM Choir Room in use</p> <p>5:00 PM English Tutoring Class</p> <p>7:00 PM Deacons Team</p>	30	<p>1</p>  <p>9:00 AM Decorate Sanctuary</p>
<p>2</p>  <p>9:00 AM Sunday School for Preschool-Adult</p> <p>9:15 AM Spanish Worship</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship Service</p> <p>12:15 PM Sermon Discussion</p> <p>4:00 PM AA Meeting for Women</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9:00 AM Westminster Guild</p> <p>11:30 AM Morning Circle Holiday Lunch</p> <p>1:30 PM Choir Room in use</p> <p>7:00 PM Bells of Praise</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6:30 PM Boy/Cub Scouts</p>	<p>5</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilting Group</p> <p>10:00 AM Ruth Naomi Circle</p> <p>4:00 PM Salt &amp; Light</p> <p>5:00 PM How to Read &amp; Study the Bible</p> <p>6:00 PM Dinner (\$3.00)</p> <p>6:15 PM Chancel Choir</p>	<p>6</p> <p>9:30 AM Christmas Coffee</p> <p>11:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>2:00 PM Choir Room in use</p> <p>5:00 PM English Tutoring Class</p> <p>6:00 PM Learning Tree Christmas Party</p>	<p>7</p> <p>6:00 PM Three Crosses RV Group Christmas Party</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9:00 AM Orchestra Rehearsal for Cantata</p> <p>11:00 AM PEO Lunch/private event</p> <p>6:00 PM Movie Night/Focal Point (High School)</p> <p>6:00 PM NAMI Christmas Party</p>
<p>9</p>  <p>9:00 AM Sunday School for Preschool-Adult</p> <p>9:15 AM Spanish Worship</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship Service</p> <p>12:15 PM Sermon Discussion</p> <p>4:00 PM AA Meeting for Women</p>	<p>10</p> <p>1:30 PM Choir Room in use</p> <p>4:00 PM NMSU Athlete Party</p> <p>7:00 PM Bells of Praise</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9:15 AM Mary Martha Circle</p> <p>6:30 PM Boy/Cub Scouts</p>	<p>12</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilting Group</p> <p>5:00 PM How to Read &amp; Study the Bible</p> <p>6:15 PM Chancel Choir</p> <p>7:00 PM Bldg's &amp; Grounds Ministry Team</p>	<p>13</p> <p>11:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>12:00 PM Jardin de los Ninos Christmas Party</p> <p>2:00 PM Choir Room in use</p> <p>5:00 PM English Tutoring Class</p> <p>5:00 PM Solo Passages/Dinner</p> <p>7:00 PM Onate Winter Choir Concert</p>	<p>14</p> <p>decorate Watkins/In-Betweeners set up for Vaughan reception</p> <p>5:00 PM Rehearsal Vaughan wedding</p> <p>7:00 PM In-Betweeners/Dessert</p>	<p>15</p>  <p>9:00 AM Cantata Rehearsal</p> <p>2:00 PM Wedding (Paul Vaughan)</p> <p>6:00 PM Advent Event</p>
<p>16</p>  <p>9:00 AM Sunday School for Preschool-Adult</p> <p>9:15 AM Spanish Worship</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship Service</p> <p>11:45 AM Deacons Ministry Team</p> <p>12:15 PM Sermon Discussion</p> <p>4:00 PM AA Meeting for Women</p>	<p>17</p> <p>1:30 PM Choir Room in use</p> <p>7:00 PM Bells of Praise</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6:30 PM Boy/Cub Scouts</p> <p>7:00 PM Mayfield Choral Concert</p> <p>7:00 PM Session</p>	<p>19</p> <p>5:00 PM How to Read &amp; Study the Bible</p> <p>7:00 PM Chancel Choir</p>	<p>20</p> <p>11:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>2:00 PM Choir Room in use</p> <p>5:00 PM English Tutoring Class</p> <p>5:00 PM Solo Passages/Dinner</p> <p>7:00 PM Jennie Curry Circle</p>	21	<p>22</p>  <p>9:00 AM Gift Wrapping by Mid/Hi School</p>
<p>23</p>  <p>9:00 AM Sunday School for Preschool-Adult</p> <p>9:15 AM Spanish Worship</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship Service</p> <p>12:15 PM Sermon Discussion</p> <p>4:00 PM AA Meeting for Women</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service</p>	<p>25</p>  <p>CHRISTMAS Office Closed</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	27	28	29
<p>30</p> <p>9:00 AM Sunday School for Preschool-Adult</p> <p>9:15 AM Spanish Worship</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship Service</p> <p>12:15 PM Sermon Discussion</p> <p>4:00 PM AA Meeting for Women</p>	<p>31</p> <p>1:30 PM Choir Room in use</p>	<p>1</p> <p>6:30 PM Boy/Cub Scouts</p>	<p>2</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilting Group</p> <p>10:00 AM Ruth Naomi Circle</p>	<p>3</p> <p>11:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4:30 PM Wedding rehearsal/private</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4:00 PM Wedding (private)</p>

# PAPER BAG LUMINARIAS

Lead your family and friends to your house this holiday with luminarias celebrating Jesus' birth.

## WHAT YOU NEED:

- Pencil
- Brown paper lunch bags
- Hole punch, tack or pushpin
- Sand
- Votive candles or tea lights

## WHAT YOU DO:

- 1 Draw a simple picture, word or symbol of Jesus' birth on the bag; for example, a star, a manger, a heart, a lamb, a wise man or the word "JOY."
- 2 Using a hole punch or pushpin, punch holes along the drawing, leaving a little space between each hole. Punch all the way through both sides of the bag so you end up with the same design on both sides when the bag is opened. When using a pin, place a piece of cardboard under the bag or work on carpet so nothing gets damaged.
- 3 Open the bag and fill each luminaria with about two inches of sand. Then sink a votive candle or tea light in the center of the sand.
- 4 Place the luminarias along a walk, patio or porch. Have an adult light the candles.



# The Son of the Highest

A new baby brings joy and the anticipation of what he or she will grow up to become. Jesus' birth was miraculous, but His life was prophesied and planned by God.

Unscramble the words below, matching them to their correct spelling. Then use the numbers to fill in the correct words to complete Luke 1:32-33 (NIV).

- |           |        |            |         |
|-----------|--------|------------|---------|
| 12. taerg | he     | 2. noS     | forever |
| 8. eh     | Jacob  | 11. seouh  | end     |
| 13. gHhi  | father | 5. northe  | Son     |
| 7. aDvid  | give   | 1. roevfr  | house   |
| 10. bocJa | great  | 6. dingmok | throne  |
| 3. reafth | High   | 9. den     | kingdom |
| 4. vieg   | David  |            |         |

"He will be \_\_\_\_\_ and will be called the \_\_\_\_\_  
12 2

of the Most \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord God will \_\_\_\_\_  
13 4

him the \_\_\_\_\_ of his \_\_\_\_\_,  
5 3 7

and \_\_\_\_\_ will reign over the \_\_\_\_\_  
8 11

of \_\_\_\_\_; his \_\_\_\_\_ will  
10 1 6

never \_\_\_\_\_."  
9

*Luke 1:32-33, NIV*

Answers: 1. forever 2. Son 3. father 4. give 5. throne 6. kingdom 7. David 8. he 9. end 10. Jacob 11. house 12. great 13. High

## Stewardship and Financial Situation

The year 2007 has been very eventful for First Presbyterian Church in many ways. You need to be aware of some of the financial aspects of those events and what we see for the near future. The paragraphs below will summarize the main points.

Our financial situation in late 2006 was rather bleak. Our Session worked hard to reduce expenses in 2007 and the congregation responded with increased pledges and total giving. As a result, the data at the end of October show that we have spent about 70 percent of our budget in 83 percent of the year. In addition, we have over \$62,000 in operating funds and over \$93,000 in operating reserve funds. Almost \$64,000 of the latter came from the sale of the Christian Day Nursery. The Session will be working on the proper use of those proceeds during the next year. The financial outlook for 2007 has been much more favorable, but it came as a result of sacrifices in employees' salary increases, mission giving, and other restrictions.

The recent stewardship campaign focused on what our church is doing with what you have given to God through our church. It is your giving of time, talent, and money that supports our outreach to our congregation and beyond. The pledging process helps us plan the budget for the following year. More than once in my personal involvement I have been asked, "How can you make a budget when you don't know how much money you will have?" While we rely heavily on faith in God to provide, we would not be doing our jobs if we did not also analyze the data from previous years. We can identify year-to-year trends in pledging, the significant amount of giving above what is pledged, and the increased costs of running the church. We begin in late summer with incomplete data and adjust as we work through the budget process. One of the important data points is the amount pledged for the following year. As of November 27, the amount pledged for 2008 is \$292,483. Again, this is incomplete data as more pledges will be submitted and there will be giving above the pledged amount. It is important for you to know that this amount is well below the amount pledged in 2006 for 2007 of about \$360,000. This will alert the session to review the budget for 2008 that is currently in draft form and reconsider what expansions can be left in the budget and what must be cut back. We have planned on expanding our programs in a slow but steady manner and this requires a steady increase in time, talent, and money to be effective.

If you have not pledged, please consider submitting a pledge card by filling one out and putting it in the offering plate or providing it to the church office. Blank cards are in some of the racks along the back of the pews. If you have difficulty finding one, just ask one of the ushers for assistance. If you have questions about the process, please call Kathy Shannon at the church office, 526-5559, or Mel Parish at 522-0125.



## New Members

A large class of new members was welcomed on November 25. From the left;



Clerk of Session, Steve Hardin

Gene Christensen – Mary Odenback;

Tracy Goodluck (back), Nancy Cowan

Bill and Jean Kuyper

Karen and Lloyd Kirschenmann (both back)

Florence and LeRoy Felhauer (both front)

Larry and Pat Felhauer

Pastor Norm Story

Not pictured:

Mike Bartholomew (affiliate member to active member)

Fred and Mary Olberg (he is bed-bound with cancer)

## The Lantern

This is the last Lantern for this year, and, as was the case this year, there will be no January Lantern. The February 2008 issue will be at least somewhat different. Discussions are underway as to in that form in which the Lantern will be published and even as to what content will be in it. Even how often it is produced will be discussed.

The options vary from a mailed color edition (expensive in both time and money) to an e-mail text edition (dirt cheap in both time and money). The content may change. Regular features may be added or removed. If you want to be a part of the effort to reshape the Lantern you *must* make your thoughts known. Contact the editor, Lon Anderson of the Congregational Life and Outreach Team, or Rev. Story.

The present features include

- The cover
- Rev. Story's page
- Notes and Announcements, Birthdays
- PW mission of the Month
- Organization minutes summary
- Beyond Our Walls
- Calendar
- Kids Page

All these features take effort (as well as paper) to produce. If there is no interest expressed in them, they may be dropped. Are there any additional features you want to see? How do you want it delivered? US Mail (expensive), Adobe pdf file (it takes effort), a text file e-mailed (almost unreadable). Make *your* preferences known.

## Status of the Phase I Renovation Debt

Last August, the First Presbyterian Church received a very generous bequest from the estate of a church member, the late Don Rubart. The bequest allowed FPC to pay off the Phase I Renovation debt to the bank, with over \$21,000 remaining.

With the bank mortgage paid off, the funds formerly directed to paying the bank are being used to pay those members (sixteen family units) of the congregation who graciously lent the church money to reduce the interest burden of the debt. That amount reached \$160,000 at the time the bank debt was paid. It was down to \$151,000 at the end of October.

While we have made significant reductions in the original debt of \$800,000, the remaining debt and interest (although lower) are still a drain on our mission and ministry at First Presbyterian Church. We give thanks for your generosity and perseverance in retiring this debt and encourage you to continue giving to Phase I until we completely eliminate the balance of the debt owed to our members.

On behalf of the First Presbyterian Church, we express our most sincere gratitude for assisting in the retirement of the Phase I Renovation debt. If you have any questions, please contact Mel Parish, 522-0125, or Kathy Shannon, 526-5559.

## Notes and Announcements

### Congregational News

#### New Address:

Scott Burns  
2600 E. Idaho # 204  
Las Cruces, NM 88011

#### Deaths:

Luella Dick died on Oct. 31, 2007.  
Carl Jacobs died on Nov. 23, 2007.

*The Lord will save me, and we will sing with stringed instruments all the days of our lives in the temple of the Lord.*

*-Isaiah 38:20*

*Please update your church phone directory*

### Staff News

- Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.
- Staff meetings are held on Thursdays at 11:00 am.
- Office will be closed on Dec. 25 and 26.
- Deadline for announcements going into the weekly Sunday Bulletin is 10:00 am on Thursday mornings.
- Tracy will be out of the office on Dec. 6, 19, and 27

### Just Ask!

One of the very best things about our church is the generosity of the people at First Pres. When something is needed, whether it is a large need or a small one, we ask each other, and someone is happy to help. An example is that recently one of our teachers needed bags for the children to use in carrying books home safely from our children's library. Rosemary Maddox sewed colorful, sturdy bags and said she enjoyed making them. We appreciate the bags and the seamstress.

### A Night In Bethlehem

On December 15<sup>th</sup> First Presbyterian Church will be transformed into the city of Bethlehem. Adults and children will gather at the church for a hands on Holy Land experience. They will walk through the market place, visit vendors, and hear the excitement around the birth of "the baby."

### Salt & Light Children's Choir

Reminder:

The Elementary and Mid School children will be singing in Worship on December 9.

### Christmas Poinsettia Plants

Don't forget to order your Poinsettia plants. They are \$6.00 ea. please make checks payable to the church. Your order must be in by Dec. 12, plants will be in the Sanctuary for Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> and Christmas Eve service. Order forms will be in the bulletin the next two Sundays or you can email the church with your order to

fpclinda@zianet.com. We will need: Your name, how many plants you wish to order and if they are in honor of \_\_\_\_\_ or in memory of \_\_\_\_\_ and whether you will take the plant after Christmas Eve worship or you want us to deliver it to a shut-in.

**Focal Point Youth**

- Dec. 8 – Movie Night, 6-9 pm
- Dec. 9 – Care cards, 2-4 pm *Botonnee*
- Dec. 14 – Christmas Party, 6-8 pm
- Dec. 15 – Night in Bethlehem, 6-8 pm
- Dec. 22 – Gift Wrapping fundraiser

**Operating Funds: October 2007**

Income	\$31,272.00
Expenses	<u>36,584.00</u>
Balance	<b>\$-5,312.00</b>

Year-to-Date through 10/31/07

Income	\$404,725.00
Expenses	<u>373,612.00</u>
Balance	<b>\$31,113.00</b>

**December Birthdays**

- 12/01 – Margaret Stevenson
- 12/02 - Marika Sauter  
Jean Bernard Nganou  
James Slack
- 12/03 – Stephanie Suggs  
Nora Yaryan
- 12/04 – Robyn Byrnes
- 12/05 – Glenn Garrett
- 12/06 – Ryan Becker  
Mary Ferguson
- 12/07 – Kelly Temple  
Bonnie Bekisz
- 12/08 – Hennessy Rubio
- 12/10 – Joel Tomlin
- 12/11 – Bruce Griffith
- 12/12 – Rena Schell
- 12/13 – Dena Hurab  
Rondla Hardin
- 12/14 – Joseph Hurab  
Darla Topley

First Presbyterian Church  
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 Web www.zianet.com/fpc  
 Rev. Norman Story, Pastor

**RipTide Youth**

- Dec. 15 – Night in Bethlehem, 6-8 pm
- Dec. 16 – Christmas Party, 6-9 pm
- Dec. 22 – Gift Wrapping fundraiser

**Attendance**

Nov. 4	283
Nov. 11	---
Nov. 18	270
Nov. 25	228

**Communion**

Communion will be served on Sunday December 2 and January 6.

- 12/15 – Deborah Austin,  
Ted Novack  
Ardell Paul
- 12/19 – Grant Watson  
Jet Dunbar
- 12/21 – Frank Clark,  
Mary DeBoy  
Donalee Bartholomew
- 12/22 – Peggy White
- 12/25 – Patricia Montoya  
Nancy Davis  
Caroline Darr
- 12/26 – Dina Schroeder
- 12/28 – Marianne Watson  
Johanna Miller
- 12/29 – Mandolen Sanchez  
Nora Hurab  
Joy Miller-Bell
- 12/30 – Jason Silva  
Pam Briggs
- 12/31 – Marti Whaley

**The Cover**

The cover is a Botonnee cross in the front of the sanctuary of the Union Christian Church in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The Lantern: Editor: Alex Burr  
 Production: Linda Ramirez  
 Photographs: Alex Burr and Robert McPherson

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## **Officer Election December 2**

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### **Mission Statement for 2007-2008**

To emulate the work, the word, and the way of Jesus Christ in ministering to the needs of members and preparing them for Christian outreach to people within and outside the Church of Jesus Christ.

#### **Our Vision Objectives for 2007-2008 are:**

- To create spiritual leaders from within our congregation to recognize and minister to members in need.
- To develop and maintain specific ways for members to reach out and draw the community into our fellowship.
- To create a God-centered atmosphere for worship that will attract and bind individuals, families, and youth to our church.