The Bridge

First Presbyterian Church of Granbury

January, 2021

From the pastor

Rev. Drew Travis revdgtravis@gmail.com



From the Pastor - January 2021

And so a new year begins. It happens every year. Every 365 days. Funny how the turn of the calendar works. We get a clean slate and we begin again on January 1. That doesn't mean that we get to declare a year of jubilee – that we get to brush the past off our backs and move forward without the encumbrances of our history. But it does give us a fresh starting place. It affords us a new launch into what is to come. It's a chance to do some reconnoitering and lay some new plans. That's why we make resolutions at the beginning of a new year and declare new goals moving forward.

I don't know about you, but I'm kind of glad to see 2020 in the rearview mirror. It's been a tough year for all of us. But the amazing thing about a fresh start is that it provides a new perspective. Sometimes all we need is a new perspective to ignite our energies. We can focus on a scene with the same eyes for so long that we can't make out everything we are viewing. A new look at a situation often enables us to see with new eyes and make new discoveries. Or, maybe it just enables us to see again what we've known all along.

Things change. One of the most hopeful aspects of this new year is the distribution of a vaccine for COVID-19. I pray that its arrival signals light at the end of the tunnel and the foreseeable return to life more akin to the normal we're accustomed to. That makes my heart happy. I watched an ICU physician receive the vaccine the first day it was out. A reporter asked him how he felt about receiving it. He said, without a moment's hesitation, "I feel like I just received a shot of hope." Eloquent truth often comes in short sentences. I resolve in this new year to be hopeful about putting this virus behind us and living in the grace of gratitude we may all experience when COVID no longer dictates so much about our lives. That will be a welcome change.

Other things will also change as we move into 2021.

Some things will change in our lives as a church community.

You know by now that Shanna has resigned her position as our Administrative Assistant and left the church's employ in mid-

December. Stephanie Mosley, our newly elected Elder for Administration, has generously been providing her presence in the office and is working hard to prepare us for a new Administrator to come join our staff. I am most grateful to Stephanie and I look forward to finding just the right person to run the office.

And, of course, just as Stephanie has stepped into this new role, we have four other elders who begin their service to the church in January. Brad Bell will be heading up our usher team. Marla Hill will be taking charge of our Membership Committee. Terry Worcester will begin envisioning long range plans for our congregation with a new committee of church folk. Susan Younk will take the reins of caring for the members of our congregation and provide pastoral care to those who need the church's presence. Linda Allen will continue her work with fellowship and we hope it won't be long before we're able to gather for fellowship in person! These new elders will join with the others on Session to provide leadership in this new decade. I look forward to working with each of them.

One more big change has occurred. After more than 10 years of service to our congregation as Music Director, Marty Gump is retiring his position and we'll be looking for someone else to lead our music program. What a presence Marty has been in our worship life. I'm glad he and Ruth will continue to be present with us as the faithful members they are.

So a new year has arrived. Some things will be different for us in 2021. But I see hope for each of us with these new changes and I see hope for us together as a congregation. God is good and I am excited to experience that goodness in this new year. That is my hope. Always.

Happy New Year. Eat your black eyed peas. See online.

Drew

Congregational Care

Susan Younk Kidd, elder 817-573-9153 susanyounk@gmail.com



We mourn the passing of our members

- Ed Hughes
- Nancy Pauley
- Kathleen Moore

Our Church Family

- Lorraine Schmitz was hospitalized with Covid-Pneumonia in mid-December, and is now home.
- Martha Ferrell took a fall at the care facility in Houston and asked for prayers from her church family.

Our extended family

- Lorraine Schmitz's son was hospitalized at the end of November with Covid. His wife passed away just 2 weeks before from Covid.
- Nancy Worcester's cousin, Rodney Smith, has died of complications of Covid. Our prayers are with Nancy and her family.
- Lori Collinsworth's brother, Marcos Millian died early December from complications with Covid.
- Eva Zapata was experiencing chest pains and had surgery in early December.

Prayer of the Month

Pat Collins, Prayer chain coordinator pat.collins37@yahoo.com



As I write this, a vaccine is being distributed to hospital personnel, first responders, and nursing homes, putting hope on the horizon for 2021. How fortunate we are that scientists worked together to create; medical professionals worked together to test; computer experts to successfully track the vaccine's proper handling; distribution competitors united with the bigger, more important picture in mind; and all levels of municipalities formulated plans for efficient and fair distribution. It has the potential at this stage to bring us all pulling together for a common purpose. I go all the way back to the Salk vaccine to remember such a happening. (Let me know if you can think of others, please.) However awful the pestilence, we have good coming out out of it. At least, I hope and pray that it is so because the devastation was and is mighty. It's like Mr. Rogers said, though, look for the helpers. Look for those caring for others. Hard to miss the confluence of helpers in our vaccine story. But, for the majority of the year, it was hard to look for the

We had Presidential Election Drama the entire year and may still be having it. It took our focus away from the Covid catastrophe before eyes (and the urgency of protecting ourselves and others), but didn't replace it with anything uplifting or inspiring. I pray for better days for this country. Days when we feel relatively safe to indulge in watching The National News. But, I return to hope for 2021, though, because it is becoming tangible. Funny how much easier it is to have hope when things get tangible. Is it even hope if it has to have at least the fringe of "real" around it? I wonder.

That brings me to Jesus. (No, not a non sequitur.) For most, if not all of us who regularly attend, we accept and reaffirm weekly a statement of faith that has no tangible fringe of reality. We believe it, we trust in it, and maybe some of us have had experiences that made God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit quite tangible. But for most, it is faith upon which we lean quite heavily. Will the fall-out from 2020 include a questioned or shaken faith? Faith relies greatly on habit and we have a great advantage there. We've been in faith-training for decades (it only seems like eons). If the pandemic brings newcomers to our door, we can invite them to use our faith until theirs grows and is strong. If some among us have been tested and feel they are losing the have-faith battle, let them rely on the faith of First Presbyterian en masse. I think the road ahead of us may still be quite rough for awhile and we will need faith in our constant traveling companion. Who will your companion be? Who is your companion now? Stay tight with our God.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we feel overwhelmed by our need of your love. There are so many who need prayer and lifting up. So many circumstances that need that need your light. Let us be the helpers wherever we can. Strengthen our faith until we can once again ask believing. Let the vaccine be all we hope it to be. We ask your blessing upon all the helpers working tirelessly on our behalf. Please bless the children, Father, and keep them safe. Bless our church, its ministers, elders, and members. Let us be able to safely open our churches, Lord. It's been too long. Father, we praise your might and glory. You are great in ways beyond the measure of man. Thank you God for the wonderful gift in the birth of Jesus, truly the light of the world. Hear our prayer, Oh Lord.

Congregational Care

Susan Younk Kidd, elder 817-573-9153

susanyounk@gmail.com



January Birthdays

Dolores Adams Kathy Long

Jamie Sanders Riley Briese

Sheila Higgins 20

Matthew Kennedy Greg Wilemon Sherry Johnson

Theda Deaver

Brenda Douglas

Gardner Davis 23

Patricia White Hanna McCray

Jim Stringer

Mary Gourley

Howard Moore

Madge Liscomb **Taylor Clay**

28

Charles Baskett Connie Darne' Louise Deems Fran Smith

Caleb Luersen Carol Boyd

12 Carole Frey

Karen Delyea Joyce Higginbotham Louise Murray 15 Rylee Hendrix

Dorothy McCree

31

Marlin Massengale Marina Kuyl

January Anniversaries

Stan & Linda Bowlin

Kelly & Susan Harding

Ken & Allyce Peters

Bianca & Bill Brownfield

Hayward & Meg Moore

Kay & William McMillian





Courtyards at Lake Granbury

Mary Skinner Jimmy & Donna Callahan

Waterview at Lake Granbury

Ted Dolan Nita Collinsworth

The Cove at Lake Granbury

Eloise Pauli

Quail Park

Nancy Pauley John Cheney Charles Basket

The Oaks of Granbury

CH Tubbs

Autumn Hill Manor (Weatherford)

Dee Holt

Bridgewater Memory Care Granbury

Kathleen Moore

At home and/or receiving treatment



Martha Ferrill **Ed Smith** Stan Bowlin Bill Lowe Jeanie Smith Jean Haight Edith George Warren Rutz

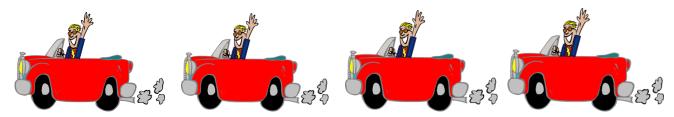
To celebrate your birthday (or that of a family member or friend), and in thanksgiving for God's gift of grace, please consider making a gift of your own, in the amount of \$1 for each year of your (or your honoree's) life, to sustain the permanent endowment funds of the church.

Please notify the church office when you make your gift that it is a birthday offering. If honoring someone else, please so note. If giving online, please provide this information in the "Notes."

Fellowship

Linda Allen, elder lindaallen33047@gmail.com





As most of you know, Brenda, our Associate Minister, has been here almost a year and has now purchased a house. She is due to move in any day now and is thrilled at the prospect of finally being able to unpack her things and get settled. Towards that end, the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee organized a "Housewarming" parade that took place last Friday, December 11th. It was a surprise for Brenda, and it was lots of fun! We fellowshipped one car at a time as church members drove by the Christmas tree in front of the sanctuary. The best part of the occasion was that Brenda got to visit in person with everyone who drove by. Gift cards to restaurants, grocery stores, Home Depot, Lowes, Walmart, and everywhere else you can think of were passed from caring member's car windows to Brenda. We clipped them to the Christmas tree and were thrilled at everyone's generosity! Brenda said later that she had to build a spread sheet to keep them all organized; that must be the CPA coming out in her. Hopefully, every time she needs something (groceries, take-out, tools, etc.) she will grab a gift card and remember the loving hands that gave it.

Fellowship comes in many forms. If we can't gather in big groups, we will gather in tiny groups, on Zoom, in cars in our parking lot, and in parades. It all brings us closer together, even if the faces are masked and you must look a little closer to figure out who it is.

Brenda was blessed by her Housewarming Parade and all the gift cards, and everyone who took part were blessed by the fellowship. It was a good day!







Christmas Joy

By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

To learn more about it visit https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/

Thank you to everyone who donated so much ribbon and such beautiful ornaments!! And Thank you to all those who gave of their time and artistic skill.

We had a great crew of wreath making elves and we made 75 gorgeous ones!!

We will deliver them along with our Christmas gifts in early December. If you would still like to contribute blankets, hot chocolate, popcorn or mixed nuts, you can drop your donations off at the church office before December 4th.



Words simply cannot express my gratitude for the wonderful Drive By Housewarming this past Friday. This congregation never ceases to amaze me. From the first time I visited, way back on September 1, 2019, I have been struck by the joy, the love, the generosity, and the true sense of friendship in this place. This Housewarming is the icing on the cake. It was wonderful to see some of you for the first time since March and even to finally meet some folks I had never met before. It was humbling to open each gift and to read the kind words that you wrote. I am not sure what I ever did to deserve such a blessing as this church! Even in such an uncertain year with a move away from "home" and Covid and the seemingly never-ending house search, you all have been such a source of strength for me. You truly are the hands and feet of Christ, to one another, and to a world that desperately needs Christ's touch. I am humbled and honored to serve alongside you! Thank you for being YOU!

In Gratitude,

Brenda

Presbyterian Women

Margaret Gulinson PW Moderator mgulinson@gmail.com 682-936-2312 (H) 214-868-7455 (C)



Wait! The holidays aren't over yet! Don't forget about Epiphany!

Epiphany is celebrated on January 6th. Most U.S. Protestants mark the day on the Sunday closest to Jan. 6 and it is usually limited to that day's church service and sermon. But it opens the church's "season of Epiphany," a time when sermons and lessons focus on the miracles of Jesus; the season ends on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the start of the Lenten season.

The name Epiphany comes from the Greek epiphaneia, meaning "appearance" or "manifestation," and refers to the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world. An epiphany is thus a time when something is shown, displayed, or manifested to an audience.

The great Feast of Epiphany celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (*magi*) from the East. This together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee are considered manifestations of Jesus as Messiah. The holiday is also called Theophany, or Three Kings' Day.

The magi's coming to Jerusalem in order to pay homage to the king of the Jews shows that they seek in Israel, in the messianic light of the star of David, the one who will be king of the nations.

In the magi, representatives of the neighboring pagan religions, the Gospel sees the first-fruits of the nations, who welcome the good news of salvation through the Incarnation. **Magi are understood to be members of the Persian priestly caste.** The king's names are thought to be Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar.

In Hellenistic culture they were regarded as "rulers of a distinctive religion," but at the same time their religious ideas were thought to be "strongly influenced by philosophy," so that the Greek philosophers have often been portrayed as their pupils. No doubt this view contains some not easily definable element of truth: after all, Aristotle himself spoke of the philosophical work of the Magi. Other meanings of "magi" are as follows: possessors and users of supernatural knowledge and ability, magicians, deceivers and seducers. Even if they were not exactly members of the Persian priesthood, they were nevertheless custodians of religious and philosophical knowledge that had developed in that part of the world and continued to be cultivated there.

To celebrate, people in New Orleans make a king's ring cake, a pastry with a tiny figurine of a baby baked into the dough. The idea is that the baby will be revealed in a slice or a bite of bread, just as Jesus was revealed as the Son of God to the kings. Some churches will do something similar – baking a cross in a cake and serving it to the congregation to reveal the Messiah.

Christmas pageants often show the shepherds leaving the stage to make room for the magi who have come to worship the newborn Jesus. Yet according to Matthew's Gospel (the only one mentioning the magi) Jesus was probably significantly older by the time the magi found their way to him. This detail is suggested by the fact that King Herod "sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men" (Matthew 2:16) who had informed him previously of the star which rose heralding Jesus' birth. Also interesting to note is that when the magi arrived, they found the baby Jesus with his mother Mary in a house, not a stable as we commonly picture it (Matthew 2:11).

Resources: Excerpts from Presbyterian Outlook, Wikipedia, and, Catechism of the Catholic Church

Bible Study - "Into the Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament", by P. Lynn Miller

Rev. Brenda Church is offering several classes for our Bible study with options for In-Person meetings and Zoom meetings. If you missed last month, come join us at one of the meetings listed below.

- Jan. 12 2nd Tues. of the month, 11:00 AM, In-Person Bible Study, in Fellowship Hall. Contact Sheila Higgins for reservations at 817-579-5722 or smhig35@gmail.com
- Jan. 12 2nd Tues. of the month, 1:30 PM, In-Person Bible Study (closed small group at Pat Collins' home)
- Jan. 12 2nd Tues. of the month, 6:30 PM, via Zoom, Virtual Bible Study. Contact Rev. Brenda Church for reservations at 817 -476-7827 or rev.brenda.church@gmail.com
- Jan. 14 2nd Thurs. of the month, 11:00 AM, In-Person Bible Study, at Ruth Gump's home. Contact Sheila Higgins for reservations at 817-579-5722 or smhig35@gmail.com

Book Circle and Bridge Circle will not be meeting this month.

Stewardship

Jack Gilmore, elder jgil429169@aol.com



STEWARDSHIP ///

Stewardship, A Way of Life

Thanks to everyone for participating in our 2021 Estimate of Giving Pledge drive. You have reached out with your hand and with your heart to touch others for Christ.

Your commitment will contribute to and make possible:

- Our worship services, music program, educational classes and many other church functions.
- Our substantial benevolent effort that touches lives in our community as well as around the world.
- Our many fun and fellowship gatherings and retreats.
- The maintenance and constant care of our historic and beautiful church building.
- And our professional staff dedicated to Christian service.

This has been and continues to be one of the most difficult years of our lives. Fortunately, vaccines are being distributed and soon, with God's guidance, the virus will be behind us. If you have not yet had time to drop off or mail your Estimate of Giving Pledge card, please try to get it in this month. We're starting budget planning for 2021 this month.

Blessings to you and yours this holiday and Christmas Season.



Worship

Julie Dean, elder juliebutlerdean@gmail.com



If you have taken communion you have been the beneficiary of someone working behind the scenes in service to God. A wonderful group of women have come together to form a Communion Guild for our church. They will prepare the sacraments before every Communion.

Please join me in thanking our new Communion Guild members:

Pat Luley (leader) Rita Hart Marijane Harvey Beverly McKusick Stephanie Mosley Claudia Southern Jaci Southern



Associate Pastor

Rev. Brenda Church rev.brenda.church@gmail.com



Happy New Year! What a wonderful chance we get every year at this time to evaluate where we've been, where we are, and where we'd like to go. The year 2020 was quite a challenge... and we aren't out of the woods yet! But what we do know is that God is still in control... watching over us and working ALL things out for good. Our God is a God of new chances. God is living and moving in our lives and in the lives of everyone we meet...even those who don't yet recognize God!

The new year is a good time to reflect and listen anew. What is God saying to you right now? What does God want you to bring into the light so that you may be free of it? What new thing might God want you to do for the Kingdom in 2021? What about our Church family? How can we be even more relevant in our community and in our world this year, even as we carefully navigate the lingering effects of Covid? How might we draw near to one another and cling to those things that we agree on, while granting grace to one another in the areas where we may disagree? How might we draw nearer to God? How might we take Scripture so seriously that we truly recognize that God is with us...that God is working miracles all around us...that we are God's own children...and that we are fully known and fully loved? Some of us have experienced great and substantial losses in the past year. How might we find the strength to carry on, and, even in our grief, to know that God holds us? How might we continue to lovingly hold one another up in the hard times? These are all good questions to ponder.

I think this New Year is different. I think, this year, we might be prone to worrying less about our health, our weight, our finances, our fingernail biting habit...whatever resolution you might normally adopt...and instead, realize that all of those things pale in comparison to our relationship with God. Maybe we have grown to learn that our relationship with God often takes care of the things that we might normally worry about. As you can see, I have more questions than answers. I look forward to studying, worshipping, praying, sharing, learning, trusting, and laughing with you in 2021! May we glorify God through all we do together. God loves you and so do I!







Christian Education

Nancy Bennett, elder nbennett0803@gmail.com



Happy New Year and Merry Christmas! Those 12 Days of Christmas are in full swing until Epiphany on January 6th so feel free to leave that tree and lights up! But turning that calendar to January 2021 sure felt good this year.

Here are a few things that we have planned:

FPC@Home: we will restart with new lessons and crafts beginning January 10th

Adult Sunday School: Richard McCarthy has volunteered to lead our Adult Sunday School class. We are looking into ways to continue Rabbi Kushner's Perkins Lecture series. Outdoor gatherings are probably not an option for a few months, so we will do this via Zoom. Look for an email with more information.

Men's Wednesday Group: Drew will continue to lead this class – meets @ noon in Fellowship Hall

PW Bible Study: it's never too late to join the monthly Bible Study, contact Pastor Brenda if you would like to join one of the in-person (daytime) or Zoom (evening) classes.

And if you are adding a daily devotional to your New Year's resolutions, here are a few suggestions:

Presbyterian Mission provides the daily lectionary readings: presbyterianmission.org/devotion/daily/

The Mission Yearbook of Prayer can be found online: presbyterianmission.org/yearbook/

D365.org provides a daily devotional for youth and the young at heart. Each day has 5 steps



"Please watch for news regarding which events will occur when we have less restrictions."

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
8:45 AM Online Worship via Facebook & YouTube	Brenda's Day Off		12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Men's Study		Drew's Day Off Office Closed - Holiday	
3	4	ις.	9	7	∞	6
8:45 AM Online Worship via Facebook & YouTube	Brenda's Day Off Undeck the Halls FUN Circle	10:00 AM Staff Meeting 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Clergy Group	12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Men's Study	12:00 PM Invitation to Sacred Space	Drew's Day Off	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8:45 AM Online Worship via Facebook & YouTube	Brenda's Day Off	11:00 AM PW Bible Study 6:30 PM PW Bible Study via zoom	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM PEO Meeting 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Men's Study	11:00 AM PW Bible Study @ Ruth's 12:00 PM Invitation to Sacred Space	Drew's Day Off	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
8:45 AM Online Worship via Facebook & YouTube	Brenda's Day Off Bridge Articles Due	12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Clergy Group 5:30 PM Session	12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Men's Study	12:00 PM Invitation to Sacred Space	Drew's Day Off	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
8:45 AM Online Worship via Facebook & YouTube	Brenda's Day Off		10:00 AM FUN Circle 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Men's Study	12:00 PM Invitation to Sacred Space	Drew's Day Off	
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8:45 AM Online Worship via Facebook & YouTube	Brenda's Day Off	10:00 AM StaffMeet- ing 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Clergy Group	12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Men's Study	12:00 PM Invitation to Sacred Space	Drew's Day Off	

A Child is Born

Poinsettias purchased In memory of ... in honor of...

Our Parents Chet, Husband

Debbie, Daughter

Judy Kirk

James (Jim) K. Butler

Ted Dolan

Winette Lovelady

Sherry, Don, Lee & Holly Davis

James T. Davis

Lowell Faulkner

Dale Sloan

Allis Baird, Mother; Clay Baird, Uncle

Joyce Lyon, Friend

Clark W. Lantz

Stuart "Bob" Higginbotham

Loved Ones

Oscar & Helen Zerfas; Max & Peg Jewell

John Lyon

John L. Jones & Noel Bayne

Elizabeth Nehring, Mother

Madison "Matty" Reed

Suzanne Larsen

Reverend Murray Travis

Peter, Tricia, Grace, Maggie & Will Reed

Todd, Renee, Sam, Kate & Tim Trent

Aimee Wallis Buchanan, A life lived in JOY!

Lawson & Linda Allen

Donna Barden

Saunya Bishop

Judy Butler

Nita Collinsworth

Gardner & Carol Davis

Derek & Vanessa Faulkner

Pamela K. Gifford

Barbara L. Goodwin-Lantz

Joyce & Susan Higginbotham

Mark & Sheila Higgins

Max & Ruth Ann Jewell

Sandi Jones

Juanita Morgan

Linda Reed

Doyle & Jane Seley

Drew & Rhonda Travis

Dave & Dennie Trent

Jim & Joanne Wallis

ISAIAH 9:6A



Outreach and Mission

Bianca Brownfield, elder biancabrownfield@gmail.com 817-751-2319



To committee members for creativity and great ideas

To all those that cheerfully made wreaths

To the people who shopped and filled bags

To everyone who donated decorations

To everyone who donated gifts and money

To everyone who made beautiful bows

To those who helped deliver the gift bags and wreaths

On December 5th, we delivered 71 gift bags for adults, 17 gift bags for families and 85 Christmas wreaths. Our theme was a Christmas movie night and we included a DVD of Nancy's third Christmas Cookie Caper in each gift. It was meaningful and heart -warming for me to contribute again to this endeavor and the gifts were warmly received. ~Bianca

:0T

202 W. Pearl St. Granbury, TX 76048

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