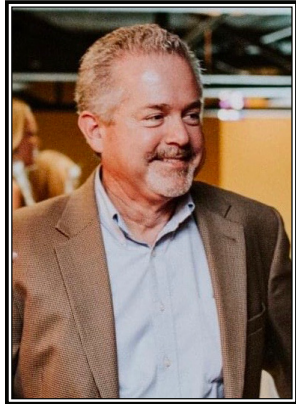


**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk

December 2020



Welcome to the strangest Advent that most of us can ever remember.

This season is already a challenge, if we're honest. Advent is a time where we discipline ourselves to wait expectantly for the coming of the Messiah. During these weeks we're supposed to try to capture some of the longing and hope that God's people lived in for centuries as they waited for God to fulfill his promise.

The problem for us is, we hate to wait.

Right? We have become (or have continued to become) very impatient people. Microwaves cook our meals. We watch whole seasons of TV shows at once. We want our technology to work right when we're ready, even if "user error" is often the cause when it doesn't. We set

our appointments too close together, so that we leave one early to be only slightly late to the next.

This COVID crisis, for all of its awfulness, has forced us to slow down. Cooking and baking from scratch is on the rise (no pun intended) all over the country. Students are taking classes from home. For most of our meetings we don't drive anywhere—we just switch on our computers or tablets. Among the many things we've learned during 2020, we've learned that it's OK to slow down—that the world won't crumble around us if we take our foot, ever so slightly, off the gas.

Waiting for the virus to go away.

Waiting for a vaccine to be available.

Waiting to be able to worship together.

Waiting to see our families again.

Waiting to go back to our favorite restaurants.

Waiting for the all-clear.

This past year has taught us a lot about waiting. It's preparing us for Advent.

And so what are we waiting for in Advent? New Testament scholar Daniel Kirk helps out, in his book, *Jesus Have I Loved, But Paul?*

"We will anticipate that not only our hearts but also our bodies, our communities, our justice systems, and our use of the earth will all become increasingly conformed to the pictures of self-giving, restorative love by which God has made himself known to the world in Christ."

That's quite a list. Dr. Kirk is nudging us to see beyond just our own lives—to see past our own relationships with God and even our own salvation—Kirk is reminding us that the coming of Christ is meant to remake and renew everything.

Everything.

This was written in 2012, but look how closely it addresses the needs we have this year. Maybe in every year. Yes we want Jesus to transform our hearts, but that's just the start.

In the midst of this pandemic we need Christ to protect and transform our bodies.

As we ride the rollercoaster of this presidential transition, we want Christ to heal our communities.

With our awareness of racism in our nation broadened, we cry out for Christ to show us a better, fairer way to manage our justice systems.

And as we fight through the politics to understand the unmistakable ways we do damage to the earth, we need Christ to teach us healthier and more sustainable ways to enjoy its provision.

What we're waiting for is a restoration of shalom, what one writer called "the webbing together of God, humans and creation, in justice, fulfillment and delight".

What we're waiting for is exactly what God has been calling his people to long for since the earliest days of the biblical record: for God to make things right again.

Friends, it's been such a hard year in so many ways, some familiar and some completely new to us. If we can learn one tiny lesson from this year as we move through Advent it's this: we're learning all over again how to wait for something that isn't in our control. That may sound like a bad thing, but it's exactly what Advent is meant to be about.

The joy of Christmas is coming. We can see it far off on the horizon. But for now we wait.

Welcome to the Advent season.

Pastor John

CHILDREN'S ED

Thank you to everyone who has ordered See's Candy. First Pres SLO's storefront will be open until December 4th. This fund raiser is replacing the Annual Bake Sale where we raise funds for our Children and Youth Programs. Your support - in this new way - is very much appreciated.

The Children's Musical will look a little different this year. But, it's going to be Great! Please tune in after Worship on December 6 to watch the virtual Children and Youth Christmas Program. We think this is about the best thing that happens every year and the Christmas Season would not be complete

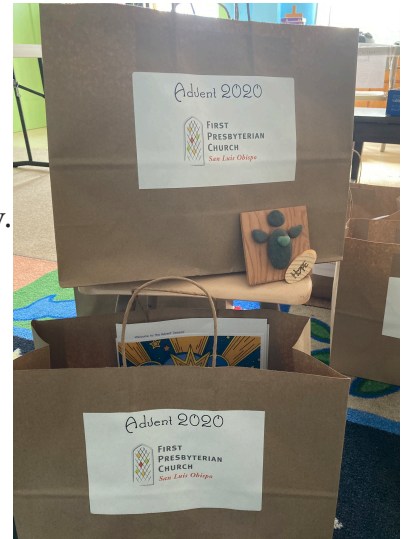
without it. We are thankful we were able to come up with a way to continue this tradition.

Advent Night kits will be/ were handed out on November 29th in the church parking lot at 1:00pm. Advent kits are for anyone who would like to participate in Advent Night this year. The Kits are not just for kids but for anyone and any family. First come first served.

This is the weirdest end of the year I think any of us have experienced! Blessings to all. Stay safe, stay healthy and wear your mask!

If anyone is interested in joining the Children's Ed Committee - let Jen know. It's a lot of fun and a beautiful way to continue to impact lives.

Jen
jen@fpcslo.org
805-543-5451 ext 105



YOUTH

The Youth Group continues to be active with Sunday Youth Group and Service Projects. They have packed Front Porch meals, done some clean up and helped Jen with projects.

They just completed the study of the Lord's Prayer and contributed great insight from their perspective. They will continue to participate as the congregation does with John's Bible in Community series.

They were able to have a Picture Scavenger Hunt and a Movie Night. Their favorite new game is "Kids Against Maturity" And yes, it's a silly as it sounds.

The Youth will be helping with the Children and Youth Christmas program which you will not want to miss. Some on screen and some behind the scenes. The Children and Youth Christmas program will be presented after worship on December 6 so stay connected and enjoy!

We have an amazing group of kids - they are always willing to step up and do whatever is needed - even during this goofy time we call 2020. We continue to be an impact on the Youth's lives and they continue to impact ours.

Stay safe and healthy and wear your mask.



Reservations required - space is limited - let the Church office know if you will be attending - 805-543-5451 or churchoffice@fpcsl.org

Any questions let Jen know - 805-543-5451 or jen@fpcsl.org

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

December is here....can you believe it? Let's pray we can get back to some normal activities soon. In the mean time We will persevere and continue our celebration of the birth of Christ for this special Holy time.

BIBLE STUDY

The Bible lesson for December is Lesson 3..."Women's Lament."

The main idea as mentioned by the writer is "In scripture and tradition women carried much of the burden of lament." The focus Scripture is Jeremiah 9:17-21 and Matthew 2:16-18

What are the most effective ways we can teach others to lament? When we go to our Lord with our most concerning matters that is a cause for lamenting how do we approach the method that fills our need? Are we most concerned for our personal needs or the issues that caused friction among our family members, the church, or friend's? It is important to give the concern to Jesus first and seek understanding, and follow His ways in dealing with the concern. We are fortunate that Jesus is our help in these times. Women take the challenge and get our study book to learn more about these wonderful lessons. The books are in the PW mail box and are \$10.00 payable to Mary Blythe.

We look forward to 2021 so we can continue our lessons either on Zoom or hopefully together before the end of the year. Keep praying for that. The lesson in January is a focus on "Lamenting Death," which gives us more ways to understand life's pressing matters and how to deal with them.

PW HORIZON MAGAZINE

In the September/October issue of the Presbyterian Women's Horizon magazine there is a wonderful article on page 4 ,5 and 6 "Praying with Jesus." It is very timely to the study of the Lord's Prayer that Pastor John has presented and the study groups have met to discuss.



CAROLING IN CARS

First Pres SLO Parking Lot - December 20 - 5:00pm
Join us for a Christmas Carol Sing Along - In your car

We will also have an ugly mask contest - decorate a mask and bring it along. If you need a mask to decorate let us know and we'll send one your way. This will not be the mask you are wearing while we sing.

Bring a battery candle if you can

Prizes and Surprises

There is a side bar prayer “Our Father and Our Mother,” you might be interested in.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

The holidays are wonderful family times, may you all have a safe and loving time as you come together. Stay fixed on and enjoy this advent season leading to the birth of Christ.

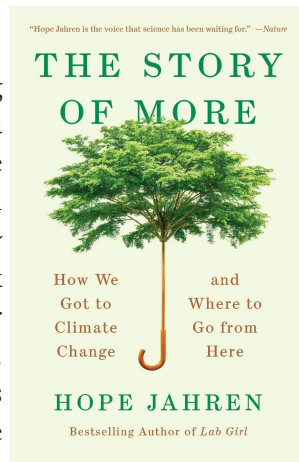
This will be my last article for the Kirk. However I pray you will keep up the interest and involvement in Presbyterian Women’s work and studies. If you are not in an existing group and want to start a group you can contact the office for a study book and DVD, the book is \$10.00 the DVD is \$20.00.

Dorothy Truesdale,
Retiring Moderator

LIBRARY REVIEW

The Story of More: The Story of Climate change and How We Got There by Hope Jahren is a book that has been added to the library and is on the book cart for borrowing.

Jahren is an award-winning scientist, a brilliant writer, a passionate teacher, and one of the seven billion people with whom we share this earth. In *The Story of More*, she illuminates the link between human habits and our imperiled planet. In concise, highly readable chapters, she takes us through the science behind the key inventions—from electric power to large-scale farming to automobiles—that, even as they help us, release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere like never before. She explains the current and projected consequences of global warming—from superstorms to rising sea levels—and the actions that we all can take to fight back. At once an explainer on the mechanisms of global change and a lively, personal narrative given to us in Jahren’s inimitable voice, *The Story of More* is the essential pocket primer on climate change that will leave an indelible impact on everyone who reads it. (Review from Amazon)



FRONT PORCH

Thanks to all of you who attended the Front Porch Virtual Fundraiser. It was a great success! Besides giving an overview of how Front Porch has impacted students (done in a cool black and white montage), Cal Poly President Armstrong spoke about the importance of Front Porch to the Cal Poly community and suggested that every college campus needs a Front Porch! Joel spoke eloquently about the importance of Front Porch, not only to the campus and its students, but also to the community.

During the evening, a very cleverly-created video was shown depicting two visitors—a racoon and a dog—sniffing around the Front Porch area wondering what had happened to all the people and the bits of food that they used to find left on the ground. The video added a humorous touch to the evening. There is a link to the video of the evening on the Front Porch website (mentioned at the end of this article).

A total of \$57,000 was raised during the evening, with matching funds of \$50,000. Of this amount raised, \$40,000 of those funds will not be received until 2021, which will give Front Porch an amazing start for next year. However, in order to end the year in the black, \$35,000 still needs to be raised. If you would like to help support this amazing ministry, please go to frontporchsl.org.

Thank you for all the support that the members of First Pres has given to Front Porch this year. It has been a hard year not being able to have the close contact that we usually have with the students.

Susan Updegrove
Chair, Front Porch Board

THANK YOU

A huge thank you for all the prayers, cards, flowers and food which have surrounded me after my eye problem. I am truly blessed to be part of such a loving, caring church family.

Susan Updegrove

DEACONS

HELP KEEP THE TRADITION ALIVE

THE DEADLINE TO DEDICATE A POINSETTIA,
“FLOWER OF THE HOLY NIGHT”
IS DECEMBER 18

Each Christmas season, for many years, members of our church family have generously supported the Deacons' flower ministry by dedicating poinsettias in honor or in memory of loved ones. These plants beautify our sanctuary during the Christmas season and then are delivered to homebound, ill, bereaved or new members to let them know we hold them in our hearts. Each loving dedication can be made for only a \$10 donation to the Deacons' poinsettia fund.

This tradition seems even more meaningful this year as we all struggle to find ways to make this season as normal as possible. Even though we are not meeting in the sanctuary due to COVID-19 restrictions, we still want to beautify our sanctuary for our taped services, and be able to give flowers to those in need.

This year we are unable to ask you in-person to donate since we are not meeting together in our church. Instead, we are making a special written request that you take a moment to send a check or go the church website and use the online giving link (details below) to make your donation. Whichever method you use, please make sure to note that your donation is for a poinsettia plant and indicate whom you are honoring or memorializing. You might even want to consider honoring an organization or group of first responders or others you feel deserve a special thank-you. We have so many to honor and remember this year. This is your opportunity to express your love and appreciation for blessings received and witnessed.

On behalf of the Deacons, thank you for your support of this important church ministry. Contact Kathy Wolff with questions @ 805 782-9790

Details:

Suggested donation: \$10.00 -- Your donation supports the Deacon flower fund, it is not for a purchase of a poinsettia to take home. The plants are given to those in need in our church family.

Send by check: First Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 591, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 Notation on check: Poinsettia fund. Please include a note about your dedication: “in honor of” (name or organization) or “in

memory of” (name)

Donation via church website: FPCSLO.ORG, click on **Donate, Give Now, e-giving other**. After you enter payment information in **NOTES** section writes: Poinsettia fund; “in honor of” (name of person or group) or “in memory of” (name)

Poinsettias -- Flores de Noche Buena or the Flowers of the Holy Night

The shape and leaves of the poinsettia flower are sometimes thought of as symbolizing the Star of Bethlehem, which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent His purity.



BOOK BROWSERS

Book Browsers is starting our 20-21 year of book discussions on Sept., 1. We will be meeting in Zoom meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. These are the books we will be reading this year.

Dec. The Other Einstein by Marie Benedict
Jan. Dreaming in French by Alice Kaplan
Feb. Say Nothing by Patrick Radden Keefe
Mar. The Daughter's Tale by Armando Correa
Apr. That Churchill Woman by Stephanie Barron
May Water From My Heart by Charles Martin

Questions: Please contact Diane Shervem at dshervem@charter.net or 805-459-9844.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

To the following seniors (over 85) who have birthdays in December:

Don Luenser – December 1
Barbara Rehborg – December 3
Richard Wiens – December 5
Nancy McKelvey – December 15 – 85 this year
Kathy Coull – December 20
Dorothy Truesdale – December 30

And to everyone else who celebrates a December birthday.

Our church records may be incomplete. If we have overlooked someone, please contact the church office.

by Gloria DeKleine

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

Please pray for our church family during this Advent/Christmas season, especially

For Pastor **John D'Elia** as he guides our congregation,

For our **Elders** as they lead us during this challenging time,

For the **Deacons** as they care for our church family,

For **Jen Rabenaldt** and others as they stay in touch with our children and youth,

For the Health Care workers and care givers in our community,

For those people worried about their jobs and businesses,

For FPC SLO members, friends and family who are undergoing treatments for various health issues,

For our church's seniors, especially those who are confined to their homes or care centers during this time of isolation,

For the family and friends of **John Evans** who passed away in October,

For members, family & support personnel serving in the military,

For all of us as we serve God wherever He calls us.

If you have a prayer concern, please call the Church Office at (805) 543-5451 or write me at gdeklein@calpoly.edu.

God bless us all,
Gloria DeKleine

GREEN PASTURES GREEN PASTURES MINISTRY TEMPORARILY CLOSED

The Green Pastures ministry that provides needs assistance to 200-400 community members a year, is temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 virus and the difficulty in providing a safe environment to administer the program.

During the interim the Green Pastures staff is providing funding to other Community organizations such as the Salvation Army to provide assistance for those in need. Green Pastures will reopen when the Church campus is open again and it is safe for staff to offer this mission.

Your continued donations to Green Pastures are important to provide for current needs and to continue this important mission in the future.

ENDOWMENT CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU!

This church's capital, held in our endowment, is keeping up with changing times enabling us to expand our horizon of mission opportunities to improve lives. That is to say in these challenging economic times, our endowment continues to expand which could lead to a more generous allotment in January 2021.

We are thankful for those who have donated the funds, through bequests and gifts, which allowed the Session to create and expand our endowment. The annual endowment allotments, though a modest part of church revenue, provide funds that would not otherwise be available for worship, Christian

education, music, missions, and more.

During the 3rd quarter of 2020, the endowment grew by 5.7%. The year to date change was plus 1.6%.

Have you prepared your will? Now is the best time to do it.

If you are currently doing tax or estate planning and/or feel led to include a gift to the First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo in your financial or estate planning, please contact any member of the Endowment Committee: Don Green, Jerry Kaml, Bert Townsend, Dorothy Truesdale, Roger Verity, or Virginia Walter (Chair). If you haven't already done so, please consider inserting one simple statement in our wills: *after all my bills are paid, 10% of my estate will go to First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo*



Even a modest gift will make a difference.

ONLINE GIVING

ANOTHER WAY TO USE ONLINE GIVING

You can get this free app from the APP Store or



Play Store. It is easy to set up just by selecting First Presbyterian Church after entering 93401. As with the other online giving methods, you can give once or set up recurring donations.

For full details, go to the Frequently Asked Questions on the Church Website. Or, for more information, contact Asst. Treasurer, Bert Townsend at 805-748-4380 or churchtreasurer@fpcslo.org.

MISSION

An opportunity for you to serve – literally!

One of the outreach missions of the church is to prepare and serve dinner to the residents at 40 Prado Homeless Service Center in San Luis Obispo on the fourth Saturday of each month. We have been fortunate to have a dedicated group of host servers for a number of years, but this coming year there is an opportunity for several new hosts to coordinate the meals. **IN THIS COVID ENVIRONMENT OUR RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE CHANGED SLIGHTLY. WE DO NOT SERVE THE MEAL TO THE RESIDENTS, BUT RATHER COORDINATE ITS PREPARATION AND DELIVER IT TO THE CENTER SO THAT SHELTER STAFF MAY SERVE IT.**

There are typically three to four coordinators that work together to cover hosting of the twelve meals we provide at the shelter. In pre-COVID times the typical tasks of a host coordinator are shown below. **MODIFICATIONS FOR OUR COVID ENVIRONMENT ARE SHOWN IN ALL CAPS AND BOLD.:**

- On the third Sunday of the month between services solicit sign-ups of volunteers to make or bring casserole, vegetable, salad, dessert and milk as well as a total of four servers. **COORDINATE VOLUNTEER COOKS FROM A LIST OF PAST HELPERS OR COOK THE DINNER WITH A FEW HELPERS IN THE CHURCH KITCHEN.**
- On the Friday before the fourth Saturday send a reminder (email or phone) to the volunteers to help them recall their contribution to the meal.
- On or before the afternoon of the fourth Saturday collect the four aprons, serving utensils, salad “bowl”, plates, cups, napkins and forks from the church. **COLLECT PLATES, CUPS, NAPKINS AND UTENSILS.**
- On the fourth Saturday arrive at 40 Prado Homeless Services Center by 4:30 pm to serve as a host along with your other server and receive the contributions of your volunteers of the meal components.

COORDINATE THE DELIVERY OR DELIVER THE MEAL TO THE CENTER.

- After the meal (approximately 7pm) collect the aprons, table cloths, serving utensils, salad “bowl” and empty pans for washing and reuse the next month. **NO PICK UP IS REQUIRED.**
- Work with Pamalee Brady and Steve Walker to select three to four months when you would like to host.
- Notify Pamalee Brady of the shortage of any serving supplies.
- Experience the sincere thankfulness of the clients receiving dinner at the shelter and know the joy of serving!

Please contact Pamalee Brady (pleebrady@gmail.com or 7832520) if you have an interest in serving in this way!

PEACEMAKING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

FPC Family,

Thank you for your generosity in supporting the Peace and Global Witness special offering in October. \$1,670.00 was donated to help extend Christ’s peace throughout our community and our world. Twenty-five percent will stay at FPC to be used for the Green Pastures ministry to the vulnerable in our community, and the remainder will go to Presbytery and PCUSA for work fighting injustice.

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

The Alternative Gift Fair (AGF) will be virtual this year, so get ready to go shopping. As in past years you may buy an intangible gift of a donation to a local, national, or international charity in honor of family and friends. You may also purchase tangible gifts from Humankind Fair Trade to support artisans in developing countries. The AGF is a wonderful way to give and to model the joy of giving to friends and family members young and old. When we shop at the AGF we experience a “Bethlehem Christmas”, because it encourages us to participate in the real Christmas story as we bring our gifts to Christ. “Whatever you did for the least of these...you did unto me.” Matt 25:40.

You should have received your packet of materials in the mail with the list of charities and directions on how to shop online or by returning the order form to church by US mail. If you have not received the packet, please call the church office to have one mailed to you, or go to the FPC website, www.fpcslo.org and follow the instructions for shopping. You may shop anytime from December 1st to the 15th.

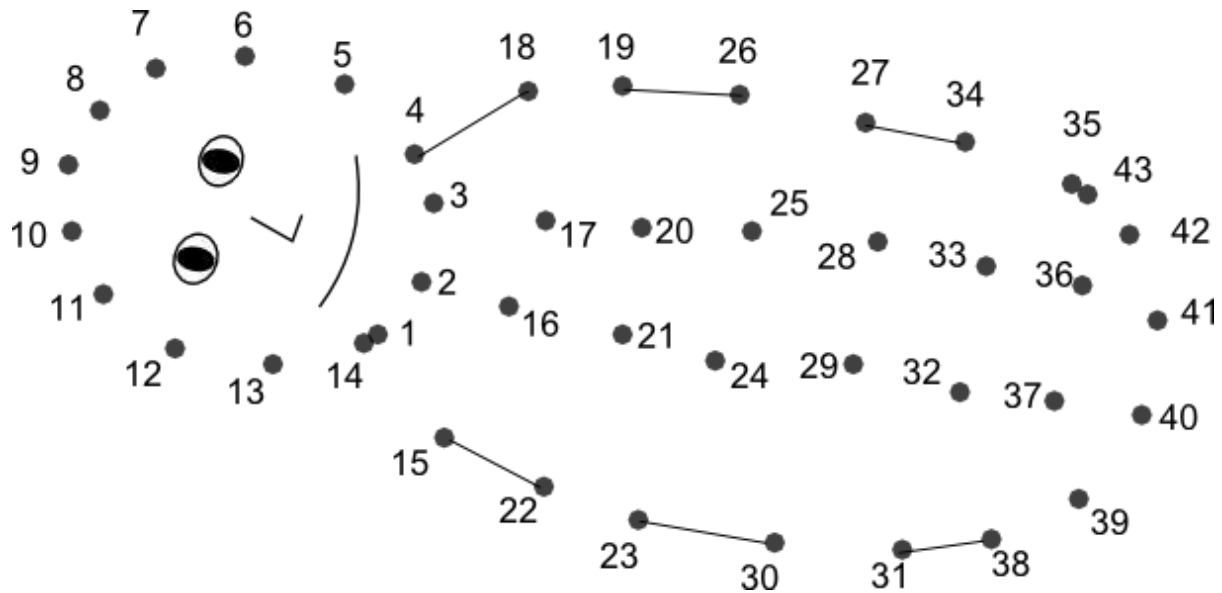
Thank you.

Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee

Jesus is Born

A Christmas activity worksheet from ministry-to-children.com

Connect the dots to see who was born in Bethlehem.



Finish the story with the words at the right.

M _____ and J _____ traveled to

B _____.

M _____ had a baby and named him

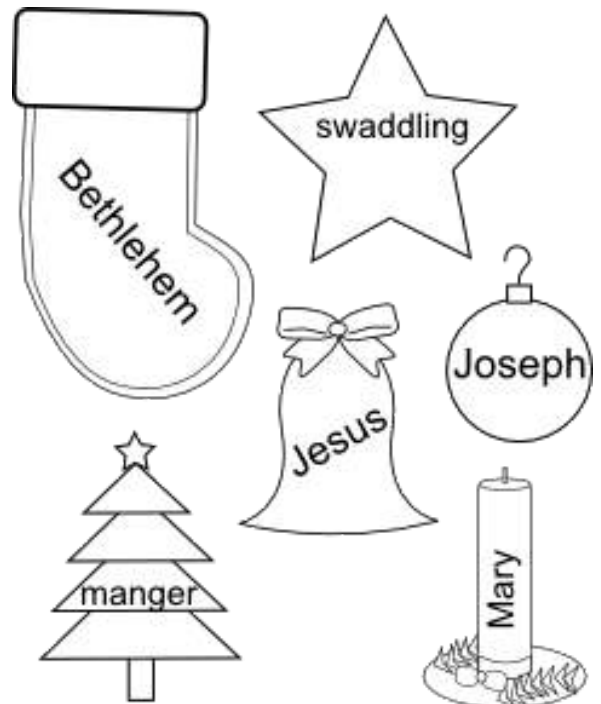
J _____. He was God's Son.

She placed J _____ in a m _____,

which was a place for animals to eat.

He was wrapped in s _____

clothes, which were strips of cloth.



Angels

An activity worksheet from ministry-to-children.com

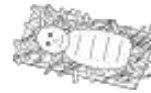
Here is a story for you to read.



Mary



Gabriel



baby



was a young woman who loved God. The angel



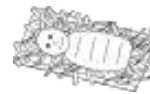
visited



said to

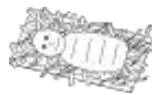


,"You will have a



.

You will name the



Jesus."

All about Angels

Find these words in the puzzle.

Angels come from **HEAVEN** to bring a **MESSAGE** from **GOD**.

CHERUBIM, **SERAPHIM**, and **ARCHANGELS** are kinds of angels.

GABRIEL and **MICHAEL** are two angels who are mentioned in the Bible.

A R C H A N G E L S
A K H O B Z I P A E
U H E A V E N T X R
J M R E G O D Y H A
O C U Q G I R F S P
G A B R I E L L W H
V M I C H A E L N I
D E M E S S A G E M

FPCSLO COVID-19 GUIDELINES

First Presbyterian Church San Luis Obispo Entry Guidelines Related to COVID-19

Anyone with the following symptoms should not enter any part of the church campus.

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Unusual headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Anyone answering “Yes” to the following should not enter any part of the church campus.

1. If you have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus within the past ten (10) days.
2. If you have had unprotected contact (*by distance AND/OR mask*) with anyone who has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus within the past ten (10) days.

Persons without symptoms must follow these guidelines.

1. All visitors will enter through the Marsh Street door to the Hart Building.
2. All visitors must sign in at the church office, and sign out when they leave.
3. Anyone entering after hours must sign in and note all areas visited.
4. All visitors will wear a sticker with the day’s date.
5. Staff will take temperature daily and confirm personal health.
6. Masks will be worn in all common areas (people alone in offices are exempt).
7. Minimum of six (6) feet of distance will be maintained between people.
8. Use of hand sanitizer and the wiping of all surfaces touched is required.

NOTE: Deliveries and pickups can be made by prior arrangement only.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

San Luis Obispo

PO Box 591
981 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA
93406
tel: 805.543.5451
email: churchoffice@fpcslo.org
web: fpcslo.org

PLEASE NOTE:

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING DECEMBER 13

The meeting will immediately follow the Zoom Church Service.

Agenda: To elect Elders and Deacons

DEACONS

2 year term: Charlotte Roberts.

3 year term: Nancy McKelvey, Margo Smith, Gloria DeKleine,
Kay Emmons, Jim Seebert.

ELDERS

1 year term: Teri Cueto

2 year term: Christina Esola

3 year term: Don Green, Eric Griffith, Steve Walker, Steve Lumm,
Ray McKelvey

NOMINATING

1 year term: Jerry Kaml, Virginia Walter