



Faith United  
Presbyterian  
Church  
in Farmers Branch

# Words of Faith

December 2020

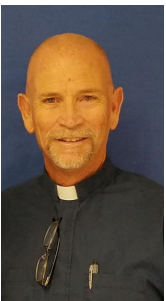
Volume X, Issue 12

*Glorify God, grow disciples, and  
meet the needs of our neighbors.*

From the Pastor

Rev. Dr. Ken Ritchie

***This kind of wilderness lays us bare.***



When I need a mental or, spiritual break, I will often picture myself on the beach at 17<sup>th</sup> Street in Newport Beach, California. I hear the surf, of which I body surfed many times. I feel the grains of sand between my toes. The sea breeze washes over me with refreshing and familiar scents. Peace and comfort, joy and hope fill my soul. Can peace and comfort, joy and hope, be found in the wilderness?

I am reminded that when we speak of wilderness, biblically, we are not speaking about white sand beaches or pristine forest havens, or great canyons or mountain peaks, or any other idyllic and serene settings. The wilderness of the Bible is harsh and austere, bleak and inhospitable. Water and food are scarce. Loneliness and isolation lurk. Trails are not established. Uncertainty and confusion, struggle and death are ever-present. The wilderness of Scripture isn't a

place we choose to go. Sometimes, we're taken there against our will – illness, loss, trauma, hardship, injustice, evil, COVID. Sometimes we end up there when our careful plans fail, when someone betrays our trust, when a beloved person dies, when the faith we've practiced so routinely, suddenly dries up.

This kind of wilderness lays us bare. In this wilderness we must contend with our own powerlessness; illusions of self-sufficiency fall apart fast. The wilderness would have us acknowledge our utter vulnerability. In the wilderness, we have no choice but to wait and watch as if our lives depend upon God showing up. Advent.

It is in this wilderness setting, the wilderness in which we find ourselves, that Isaiah says the Word of God comes, as God's Word speaks tenderly to us of comfort and hope, peace and joy. The message of the prophet is clear, things are

terrible now, but take comfort – there is a tomorrow.

The Scripture passages we hear on this Second Sunday in Advent assume we are wandering in the wilderness. Yet, comfort awaits. Here is your God, who comes to gather, feed and carry!



I hope to see you each Sunday, 11:00 am, either through YouTube or Facebook for worship as we continue our Advent journey. Invite family and friends to tune in.

Don't forget the Metrocrest Toy drive!

Let's continue to choose love and compassion, kindness and empathy. Do justice and seek to make peace. Persevere in prayer. Stay connected with each other.

In Christ's Love,

*Pastor Ken*

Ken@FaithUnited-pc.com

## Outreach &amp; Evangelism

Debbie Rainier

**Metrocrest Services Christmas Toy Drive Thru Drop Off** events will be on December 5th and December 12th, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. See below for more info.

At Christmas time, we have a wonderful opportunity to share our Christmas Joy with others.

The **Christmas Joy Offering** affects the lives of many people outside the walls of our church home. The amounts collected (designated **Joy Offering** in memo section) during Advent and the Christmas season will be distributed equally to the following:

- ♦ PCUSA Board of Pensions for special needs of active and retired clergy
- ♦ Developing our Future Leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Presbyterian Church (USA)



Thank you in advance for your consideration and donations to the Metrocrest Services Toy Drive and Joy Offering. For more information about the Toy Drive or Joy Offering please contact Debbie Rainier, 972-342-2652, [debbierainier@yahoo.com](mailto:debbierainier@yahoo.com).

## Brighten a *child's holiday.*

### TOY DRIVE

Each donated toy gives hope to a child of opening up at least one gift this holiday season.

Help by donating new unwrapped toys for children ages 1-18. Collect toys based on what you think a child or teenager would like or refer to our Most-Needed Toy list below.



#### MOST-NEEDED TOY ITEMS

Sports & college apparel  
Electronics, video & board games  
Gym bags & sports equipment  
Wallets, jewelry, & watches  
Leggos  
Hair dryer, flat & curling irons  
Nail & cosmetic sets  
Perfume/cologne sets (AXE sets)  
Wal-Mart & Amazon gift cards  
Disney themed items  
Marvel themed items

### Metrocrest Santa Store 2020!

Bring your NEW unwrapped gifts to one of our "Drive through" events.

- \* Saturday, 12/5,  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- \* Saturday, 12/12,  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

We will deliver the gifts to the Store on or before Monday, 12/14.

*Thank you for your  
donations!*

**metrocrest**  
 **services®**  
*building a stronger community together*

## Happy Birthday!

### December 1

\* Steve Laclede

### December 12

\* Jerry Dunaway

### December 13

\* Miranda Rodriguez

\* Marilyn Rose

### December 16

\* Gail Dunaway

### December 20

\* Annette Shepard

### December 22

\* Ruth Yost

### December 26

\* Bob Howell

### December 30

\* Nick Norman

### December 31

\* Dottie Cogar



**Next newsletter is January 2021. Deadline for articles, Friday, December 18.**

**Contact church office or Brenda Swindle via email to submit articles.**



### Rehab/At Home:

- ♥ Margaret Jones
- ♥ Marilyn Rose
- ♥ Freddie Simmons

### Prayers for:

- ♥ Dottie Cogar
- ♥ Dale Durcholz
- ♥ Kathie Heffler
- ♥ Roger Jones
- ♥ Betty Runkel
- ♥ Dennis Van Deventer

## Christmas Eve Drive-In Worship

The pandemic may change how we worship, but it will not stop worship - especially as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus on Christmas Eve. This year we will offer a Candlelight and Communion Christmas Eve Worship Service with Iglesia Emmanuel in the parking lot! Everyone will be safely socially distanced in their cars while Pastor Ken and

Pastor Leo from Iglesia Emmanuel lead the service from a platform by the front door. The service will be broadcast over a FM radio signal that you will be able to hear on your radio. When you arrive you will receive a battery-operated candle and a communion packet. The service will also be live-streamed through Facebook for those who are unable to be present. Invite your family, friends and neighbors to join us!



## Weekly Bible Study class

Rich Lewis

Our adult Sunday School class, **Weekly Bible Study**, is currently being taught by video. Links to these videos are included in the weekly News Brief. Here is the schedule for December.

**Dec. 6 - Dec. 20:** Advent studies based on *Travel the Highways of Advent* by Stan Purdum.

**Dec. 27:** A Christmas lesson also based on the same book by Stan Purdum.

Expect updates and links to be on the website: [www.FaithUnited-pc.com](http://www.FaithUnited-pc.com) or the Faith United YouTube channel.





## Advent & Christmas @ Faith United

Sunday, 12/6 **Adult Sunday school class** at 9:30 a.m.  
**2nd Sunday of Advent**, Communion Worship at 11 a.m.

Sunday, 12/13 **Adult Sunday school class** at 9:30 a.m.  
**3rd Sunday of Advent**, Worship at 11 a.m.  
Stated Session meeting, via Zoom at 1 p.m.

Sunday, 12/20 **Adult Sunday school class** at 9:30 a.m.; **4th Sunday of Advent**, Worship at 11 a.m.

Sunday, 12/24 **Christmas Eve**, Communion Worship at 4:30 p.m. Drive-In style in FUPC parking lot

Sunday, 12/27 **Adult Sunday school class** at 9:30 a.m.; **1st Sunday of Christmas**, Worship at 11 a.m.

All worship services and classes available via Facebook Live or on Faith United's YouTube channel.

Worship resources available at [www.FaithUnited-pc.com](http://www.FaithUnited-pc.com)



### Online Worship Continues

You will find Worship Guides and resources on our website:

[www.FaithUnited-pc.com](http://www.FaithUnited-pc.com)



You will see the logos (right) on the website and can choose which method with which you would like to worship.



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**On the Web!**  
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