



Faith United
Presbyterian
Church
in Farmers Branch

Words of Faith

December 2021

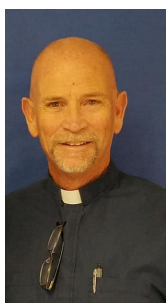
Volume XI, Issue 12

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

From the Pastor

Rev. Dr. Ken Ritchie

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God



Grief and the season of holidays do not go together well. For many people their experience of December is that of a blue Christmas rather than a dreamy white Christmas. The pain of grief is real and is seldom comforted by superficial Christmas songs, temporary holiday cheer, or shallow goodwill towards all. Retail therapy only goes so far. It is hard to sing of love, joy, hope, and peace, when the heart cries in pain and sorrow.

Grief is all around us. We continue to experience loss upon loss because of the real threat of the ever-evolving COVID. Fatigue and frustration are boiling over in anger and disillusionment. In the midst of this wilderness experience so many also encounter unwanted changes, aging issues, health issues, economic issues, and of course, our greatest enemy, death itself. The burden of these challenges is magnified when culture sings that this is the most wonderful time of the year.

As we journey to Bethlehem during Advent, we encounter the unconventional John the Baptist. John the Baptist understood his ministry as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, the voice of one crying in the wilderness. His message helps give definition to how we prepare for the coming of God to us – prepare the way of the Lord. This is why repentance is an Advent theme.

Yet, in John's claiming the mantle of Isaiah, we can also be reminded of how the Isaiah prophecy began:

*Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God (Isaiah 40:1)*

Isaiah spoke of valleys being filled and mountains made low, the crooked made straight and the rough ways made smooth, as John quoted. This is not our doing; it is the work of God who has chosen to come to us in Christ. We can see the salvation of God because of God's steadfast love and faithfulness birthed in a stable, evidenced in love and healing, crucified on a cross, and raised from the grave.

It is good to acknowledge our pain and grief in Advent, and to give space to those struggling. The God of strength is moving within us; the God of courage is hearing our distress; the God of hope is revealing wholeness; the God of healing is touching us in our brokenness. God sustains and redeems. In our loneliness and

isolation God is present in love and comfort. You are not alone. We are not alone.

I hope to see you Sundays in December as we continue our journey through Advent.

Let me know of any needs or concerns. If you would like to visit with me, let me know and we can arrange a time to meet.

Let's continue to choose kindness, compassion, and love; let do justice and make peace; let's welcome the stranger; let's persevere in prayer, as we glorify God, grow disciples, and meet the needs of our neighbors.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Ken

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Words of Faith

Outreach & Evangelism

Debbie Rainier

Metrocrest Services Christmas Toy Drive & Drive Thru Drop Off Our drive thru event will be on December 11th, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Toys will also be collected in the designated area at FUPC. 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.



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 2021!

This year we have several ways to participate in the Santa Store giving.

- 1) Bring your New unwrapped gifts and put them in the designated location at the church.
- 2) Bring your NEW unwrapped gifts to our "Drive through" event on Saturday, 12/11, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

If you cannot participate in one of these ways, call the church office for assistance. We will deliver the gifts to the Store on or shortly after Monday, 12/13.

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



Homebound or Recovering:

- ♥ Charley Rae Furrh (Terri Russell's cousin)
- ♥ Freddie Simmons

Prayers for:

- ♥ David Duell
- ♥ Dale Durcholz
- ♥ Kathie Heffler
- ♥ Roger Jones
- ♥ Mike Jones
- ♥ John Marxer
- ♥ George & Mozelle Mills
- ♥ Dennis Van Deventer

Worship services are available In-Person, via Facebook Live, or on our YouTube channel.

Worship resources available at www.FaithUnited-pc.com



Christmas Eve Worship

This year we will offer an in-person Candlelight and Communion Christmas Eve Worship Service at 5 p.m. It will be live-streamed through Facebook for those who are unable to be present. And available on our YouTube channel shortly after the service concludes. Invite your family, friends and neighbors to join us!



Weekly Bible Study class

Rich Lewis

The class is currently led by Rich Lewis. They continue a series of Advent lessons that began 11/28. These lessons will be based on Adam Hamilton's book, *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*. Each session will include a video on a chapter in the book. 12/5: *Emmanuel in the Midst of a Pandemic*; 12/19: *The Light of the World*. They will not meet on December 12. They meet from 9:45 to 10:45 in classroom #4.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		30 7:30 OA-Fellowship #1	1 9:30 LTCDS #1	2	3 9:00 LTCDS Fellowship Hall #1	4 9:00 GA Double Rm #4 11:00 OA-Fellowship #1
	5 Advent 2 9:45 Adult Sunday School 11:00 Communion Worship 11:00 Iglesia-Fellowship Hall	6 7 pm GA-Room #2	7 7:30 OA-Fellowship #1	8 9:30 LTCDS #1	9	10 9:00 LTCDS Fellowship Hall #1
	12 Advent 3 9:45 Adult Sunday School 11:00 FUPC Worship 11:00 Iglesia-Fellowship Hall 1:15 FUPC Session	13 7 pm GA-Room #2	14 7:30 OA-Fellowship #1	15 9:30 LTCDS #1	16	17 9:00 LTCDS Fellowship Hall #1
	19 Advent 4 9:45 Adult Sunday School 11:00 FUPC Worship 11:00 Iglesia-Fellowship Hall	20 7 pm GA-Room #2	21 7:30 OA-Fellowship #1	22 9:30 LTCDS #1	23	18 9:00 GA-Double Rm #4 11:00 OA-Fellowship #1
	26 9:45 Adult Sunday School 11:00 FUPC Worship 11:00 Iglesia-Fellowship Hall	27 Church Offices Closed 7 pm GA-Room #2	28 7:30 OA-Fellowship #1	29 9:30 LTCDS #1	30 Church Offices Closed	25 9:00 GA-Double Rm #4 11:00 OA-Fellowship #1

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On the Web!
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