

Eastminster Eagle

Volume 33, Issue 1

January 2021



Welcome, 2021!

A large, stylized text graphic reading "Welcome, 2021!" in white and blue. The background is a dark blue with white and light blue splatters, and green and blue paint splatters around the text.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29: 11

The new year usually brings a bag of mixed emotions depending on how your “left behind” year has been. I suspect that for many of us, the emotions in the bag are more similar this year than any other time. Yes, some had a good year; others have done their best to wade through. But, all of us have been affected by feelings of isolation. Now, more than ever, though, we are called to live into that promise that we repeat almost casually, “God is with us!” Well, God was, is and will always be! That is the Gospel truth, and I pray we all live it, not just say it in this coming year. As we have moved from the celebration of the birth of our Lord, may the power of the Christ-light in us all be the strength that carries us into a fresh, new beginning. As the world changes all around us, our God never does. In that may we find hope for this new year.

May this prayer that I borrowed and revised be as comforting to you as it is to me!
The peace of Christ IS with us!
Pastor Sherry

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Dear God, thank you that you make all things new and that you have allowed into our lives this past year the good and the difficult things. These continue to be a reminder that we need you and we need to rely on your presence with us every single day.

We pray for your Spirit to lead us each step of this new year. Guide us in our decision-making, open and close the doors we need to move forward in faith, give us the patience to wait for you answers of “no or not yet, yes or wait.” We ask for your wisdom, for your strength and power to be constantly present within us. We pray you would make us strong and courageous for the road ahead. Give us ability beyond what we feel able, let your gifts flow freely through us, so that you would be honored by our lives, and others would be drawn to you.

We pray for your protection over our families and friends. We pray that you would give us discernment and insight beyond our years, to understand your will, hear your voice, and know your ways. We ask that you would keep our footsteps firm, on solid ground, helping us to be consistent and faithful and not easily distracted by other things that would seek to call us away from a close walk with you.

Forgive us for the times we have worked so hard to be self-sufficient, forgetting our need for you, living independent of your spirit. Forgive us for letting fear and worry control our minds, and for allowing pride and selfishness wreak havoc over our lives. Forgive us for not following your ways and for living distant from your presence. We

confess our need for you ...fresh ...new ...again.

Keep your words of truth planted firm within us, help us to keep focused on what is pure and right, give us the power to be obedient to your word. Remind us we are safe with you and your purposes and plans will not fail.

We ask that you would provide for our needs, we ask for your grace and favor. Help us to be known as great givers, help us to be generous and kind, help us to look to the needs of others and not be consumed by only our own. May we be lovers of truth, may the fruits of your spirit be evident in our lives - your love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Shine your light in us, through us, over us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set you way before us. May all your plans succeed. We may reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing. To you be glory and honor, in this new year, and forever. In Jesus' name. Amen.



**Notes From
Fred**

It's easy as we start this New Year to be downcast with all that has transpired the past year. No need to recount all that has happened to us and how it has affected each of us. The circumstances in which we find ourselves could cause much anxiety, anger at others including God. Some would say we are justified in our anger, anxiety, fear, etc. But I can assure you that whatever has happened to you there are others that have had worse things, loss of job, family and friends through death, homes, disease and more. I even know of some who have turned their back on their church because it wasn't meeting. But we as Christians of all peoples on earth should not be so downcast. We have just gone through the symbolic season of God's greatest gift to us through Jesus. Yes, it's hard with all that's going on to be really joyful, but we should be. There will always be problems in our lives and events beyond our control so shake it off. Think about God's effort to show us his love and how we should try to spread and share that love even under the most terrible of conditions that may befall us.

Yes, I'm subject to all those feelings of anger, depression, the missing of friends and family, and being able to worship and praise God with our church family. When I start to get down, I try to remember God is in charge and as the writer of Revelation is saying no matter what God and God's purpose will overcome our

present and future situations...." From Rev 19:6 "Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth" and Rev 11:15 "And He shall reign forever, and ever."

So when you get down do what I do and listen to our choir, Melody, and the brass sing The Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah, Its on our website and here is the link <https://www.eastminsterdallas.org/ministry-of-music.html>. Singing with it is good also. It should help and I pray that when Easter 2021 comes we will be able to share it together in worship in person once again!



Puzz[e]!

Complete each saying below. Then place the words from those blanks in the correct order to complete Proverbs 23:4.

1. When the going gets tough, the tough _____ going.
 2. People who live in glass houses should _____ throw stones.
 3. If the shoe fits, _____ it.
 4. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is _____ to enter the kingdom of God."
 5. Good things come _____ those who wait.
 6. When in Rome, _____ as the Romans do.
 7. Don't wear _____ your welcome.
 8. If you want something done right, do it _____.
-

Write the unscrambled proverb here:

PROVERBS 23:4

Answer: Do not wear yourself out to get rich. Proverbs 23:4

"For last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await another voice." —T.S. Eliot

"Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future."

—Paul Boese

"The earth has music for those who listen." —Unknown

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

—Mahatma Gandhi

Rock of ages

On walks, I enjoy searching for heart-shaped rocks. One day in 2020, I spotted a broken heart, which seemed fitting as illness, racism and suffering dominated the headlines. I thought of Psalm 34:18, NIV: "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Humans can be hard-hearted — pointing fingers, assuming the worst and failing to extend compassion. We often reject people who look, think or act differently from us. All these things break hearts, including God's. Only with his help can we rise above hatred, learn to listen more than we speak, and express kindness, empathy and a willingness to learn.

Jesus, be our rock as we face life's brokenness. Stay near and start the healing. Amen.

—Julie Lee



| | Families | Adults | Seniors | Children | Persons | Pounds |
|---------|----------|--------|---------|----------|---------|--------|
| Nov. 3 | 239 | 561 | 69 | 1264 | 1,264 | 18,130 |
| Nov. 10 | 253 | 570 | 73 | 568 | 1,211 | 16,412 |
| Nov. 17 | 234 | 512 | 75 | 536 | 1,123 | 14,756 |
| Nov. 24 | 235 | 488 | 80 | 571 | 1,139 | 15,725 |
| Totals | 961 | 2,131 | 297 | 2,309 | 4,737 | 65,023 |

The following information is from Martha Doleshal of the Pleasant Grove Food Pantry and the link is to the Dallas Morning News article about the seriousness of hunger in our community and city.

Dear PGFP Board Members,

We have some good news.

1. Follow this link : <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2020/12/17/north-texas-food-bank-local-pantries-prepare-to-lose-millions-of-pounds-of-food-in-2021/> for the Dallas Morning News article that includes Pleasant Grove Food Pantry.
2. Monday of last week we received a Donor Advised donation from Communities Foundation for \$10,000.
3. Monday of this week we received a donation from Atmos Energy for \$10,000.

Then, there's the not so good news.

There are still more people than ever before in need of food for their families. So many cannot even afford to pay their rent or mortgage and are about to be evicted. A lot of them have lost their medical insurance. They need help like never before. Please pray for them.

With all that said, I hope and pray that you are all safe and well.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Martha

The following is more information from Martha concerning the Pleasant Grove Food Pantry: PGFP is an all-volunteer agency.

We do have an outreach specialist from North Texas Food Bank on-site every Tuesday to help with SNAP applications.

We also host other vendors who provide information about community events, Covid-19 testing, flu shots, Medicaid and Medicare, pet neutering and pet food (sometimes).

We hosted drive-thru events for voter registration and the census.

We are a job training site for Life Skills students from 3 DISD schools as well.

Why all life is sacred

Scripture does not know of any human life which is so commonplace that it is not valuable enough to become eternal, and this is its high optimism. Nothing is too much for Scripture. Since every person is known by God by name, and since every person exists in time in the presence of the God who is judgment and salvation, every person is a person of eternity, and not just the noble spirits of history. —Karl Rahner



An Update From The ADA Task Force

Lest anyone think that the project to upgrade the church facilities to help our congregation and visiting worshipers with physical challenges get around the place more easily has stalled, fear not. Much work continues on the project and there is much more left to do.

- A construction set of drawings has been received from the architect, Young Chung
- Requests for bids have gone out and a number of walk-throughs have been completed with general contractors
- Copies of the construction set have been distributed to task force members and potential general contractors
- The Task Force has specifically sought out bids from minority-owned businesses

The next steps:

- Initial bids should be received before January 1, 2021
- Bids will be reviewed by the task force in early January
- A recommended “winning bid” will be sent to the Presbyterian Foundation, our proposed lender, for review
- A presentation with recommendations will be made during the January session meeting
- Upon approval by the session, a presentation to the congregation during the annual congregational meeting in January will be made with a request for approval
- Upon full approval, construction work could begin as early as February, 2021

Exciting stuff? Yes! These much-needed and long-awaited updates, upgrades and improvements to the facilities are long overdue. We believe that God has led us in this direction and that through Him all things are possible. His will be done!

The Magi's story — and ours

The story of the Magi is our story. God has used his supernatural means to draw us unto himself. ... On one glorious day, when we were exhausted and wearied in our sin, God led us to gaze



upon Jesus just as the Magi did. We see the glory of God manifested through Jesus Christ in the internal work of the Holy Spirit. We see our utter sinfulness and God's abounding grace offered in the Messiah. We are filled with joy as this grace sinks into our hearts.

We fall down on our knees and confess our need of this Messiah. We worship him and offer up our lives as our greatest offering to him. Then we continue on in our lives, carrying the truth about the Messiah.

—Travis Cunningham, tvcresources.net

Still searching for a New Year's resolution? None is more worthy than becoming Christ-like. In fact, 19th-century evangelist Henry Drummond calls it "the only thing in the whole world worth caring for."

Two modern-day authors offer more insights. Stormie Omartian points out that we're either making progress or backsliding on this goal. "There is no neutral position in the Lord," she writes. "You are either becoming more like Christ every day or you're becoming less like him." And followers of Jesus must keep the goal always in focus. Christ-likeness is our "eventual destination," writes Rick Warren, but the "journey will last a lifetime."

A word for the year

Every January, some people pray and ask God to provide a word for their year ahead. Friends have shared theirs with me, but I was hesitant to embrace the practice myself. I'd love to receive a word like flourish; then again, I might be like the friend who heard health and then faced many physical challenges that year.

But I tried it for 2020 and heard prepare. My first reaction was that the word wasn't very exciting, which possibly confirmed I hadn't orchestrated it. Indeed, 2020 ended up full of significant, unexpected change for our family, with careers, school, church and friends. Prepare reminded me that amid chaos, God had prepared me for each moment and continues to prepare me for what's next.

Give it a try! Regardless of the word you receive or what lies ahead, you can trust that God loves you and is ultimately in control for 2021 and beyond. —Janna Firestone



In the story of the Magi, what word is used to give a sense of Jesus' age when the wise men visited? What does it tell us?

- A. "baby"; Jesus was still a newborn in a manger
- B. "child"; when the wise men visited, Jesus had grown past infancy
- C. "youth"; Jesus was probably between 10 and 14
- D. No word is used to suggest Jesus' age at the time of the wise men's visit.



Answer: B (See Matthew 2:1-12.)

Epiphany Epiphanies

Sometimes brief words of ancient wisdom can spark an "aha!" moment — a revelation of new insight about God or faith. Here are some epiphanies for the season of Epiphany.

"If we approach with faith, we too will see Jesus ... for the Eucharistic table takes the place of the crib. Here, the Body of the Lord is present, wrapped not in swaddling clothes but in the rays of the Holy Spirit." —St. John Chrysostom (347-407)

"So that we might also have the means to go, the one we were longing to go to came here from there. And what did he make? A wooden raft for us to cross the sea on. For no one can cross the sea of this world unless carried over it on the cross of Christ."

—St. Augustine (354-430)



Scripture Readings for January

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 - John 16:23b-30 | 11 - Mark 1:1-13 | 22 - Mark 4:35-41 |
| 2 - John 6:35-42, 48-51 | 12 - Mark 1:14-28 | 23 - Mark 5:1-20 |
| 3 - John 6:41-47 | 13 -Mark 1:29-45 | 24 - John 5:2-18 |
| 4 - John 14:6-14 | 14 - Mark 2:1-12 | 25 - Mark 5:21-43 |
| 5 - John 15:1-16 | 15 - Mark 2:13-22 | 26 - Mark 6:1-13 |
| 6 - Matt. 12:14-21 | 16 - Mark 2:23-3:6 | 27 - Mark 6:13-29 |
| 7 - John 2:1-11 | 17 - John 4:27-42 | 28 - Mark 6:30-46 |
| 8 - John 4:46-54 | 18 - Mark 3:7-19a | 29 - Mark 6:47-56 |
| 9 - John 5:1-15 | 19 - Mark 3:19b-35 | 30 - Mark 7:1-23 |
| 10 - John 1:1-7, 19-20, 29-34 | 20 - Mark 4:1-20 | 31 - John 7:14-31 |
| | 21 - Mark 4:21-34 | |



Eastminster Christmas Village 2020

Of all the adjustments we've had to make this year because of Covid, by far the most difficult is the accommodation we've had to make in our relationships with others. And nowhere were those contacts more threatened than our beloved Christmas Village. So many things had to change this year – no indoor “shopping” by our guests, no shared hot meal and fellowship, no family pictures at the Christmas tree. It was touch-and-go for a bit as we wondered whether there would even BE a Christmas Village this year. But our God is amazing, and with His guidance and your ever-present generosity, the event did happen. And it was a thing of beauty.

On a glorious day bookended by nasty weather, fourteen families received the bounty of God's people. Each family received boxes of food, presents of toys and books, personal pampering items, Bibles for each of the forty-two children, and even the hot meal materialized – in neatly-packaged “to go” boxes. An extra special addition this year was the partnership with the congregations at St. Andrew's Presbyterian church in Dallas and First

Presbyterian Church in Mesquite. St. Andrew's folks adopted kids and bought for them. First Mesquite contributed a large portion of the food items and their youth were on hand to load cars and wish “Merry Christmas” to each family.

God provided the impetus to keep this outreach event alive, but you as a congregation did the leg work that made it happen. Thank you. Thank you for your generous care for others. Thank you for believing that this event should go on – albeit from behind masks and standing six feet apart. Thank you for mirroring the face of Christ to people who – like us – really needed a human touch. To God the Glory; to you all a big thumbs up.





Waiting until God is heard

We're often taught that prayer is speaking to God. And of course, that's part of it. It's good to pray for the well-being and needs of others — even Jesus prayed for his disciples. It's okay to pray for our own growth in faith and love. It's a wonderful, powerful thing, modeled especially by the Psalmists, to give God thanks and praise. And God welcomes our cries of pain and sorrow, offering the Spirit's help when words fail us (Romans 8:26).

But through the ages, many deeply faithful followers of Christ have practiced contemplative prayer, centering prayer and other forms of stillness before God. Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) expressed it this way: "To pray does not mean to listen to oneself speaking. Prayer involves becoming silent, and being silent, and waiting until God is heard."



Denise Bennett
Betty Crabtree
Kayla Dixon
Ronnie Dixon
Blair Garrett
Kathy Kreger
Jim Lee
Paul McLin
Michele Pappas
Helen Randolph
Vicki Thiebaud
Charlotte Turner



| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Pastor | Sherry Holloman |
| Director of Music | Fred P. Watkins |
| Organist | Melody S. Davis |
| Administrative Assistant | Chandra Anderson |
| Hostess/Housekeeper | Minerva Hernandez |
| Child Care Provider | Betty Crabtree |

HIGHLIGHTS from the STATED SESSION MEETING

December, 2020

- ♦ Welcome to the Class of 2023! The Session is glad to have Betty Crabtree, Blair Garrett, Jim Lee and Charlotte Turner joining the ranks.
- ♦ The treasurer reported that for the 2020 giving year, donations are projected to be above budget and expenses are below. The federal PPP loan will be forgiven with qualifications of salaries and utilities meeting the loan agreement.
- ♦ The Outreach Committee will be encouraging participation in SOUPER BOWL OF CARING in February. Several socially distanced activities will be a part of this fund-raising event that will benefit the North Texas Food Bank and Pleasant Grove Food Pantry. Watch for details to come.
- ♦ Cindy Garrett will become the EPC Treasurer for 2021. Thank you, Cindy, for taking on this role that is so important in the life and ministry of Eastminster. Bruce Turner will continue as Assistant Treasurer. Chandra Anderson will continue as Financial Secretary. Tony Bennett will serve as Assistant Financial Secretary.
- ♦ Ronnie Dixon has been appointed as Clerk of Session 2021. Charlotte Turner and Denise Bennett, past clerks, will happily help him learn the job with much encouragement.
- ♦ Bids are incoming for review by the ADA Task Force on improvements to the EPC facility.
- ♦ The nursery remodel is near completion thanks to the task force that, after the water damage, has replaced flooring, wallboard, and tile. They have painted, replaced window coverings, and installed new furnishings. All thanks to insurance settlement money, all of this was completed without cost to the congregation!
- ♦ The Wilkinson Toy Distribution event held in a drive-through fashion in the EPC parking lot was a great success. Channel 11 CBS news covered the event in their evening newscasts.
- ♦ The Ruling Elder Class of 2020 was thanked for their tireless work for the past three years. Outgoing officers thanked were Janice Bell, Tony Bennett, Janet Muller and Bruce Turner.

Special dates

New Year's Day, January 1, 2021

Epiphany, January 6, 2021

Baptism of the Lord, January 10, 2021

Religious Freedom Day, January 16, 2021

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 18, 2021

Prayer Week for Christian Unity, Jan 18-25, 2021

Inauguration Day, January 20, 2021

