

Eastminster Eagle

Volume 40, Issue 1

January 2023

Not one of these people, even though their lives of faith were exemplary, got their hands on what was promised. God had a better plan for us: that their faith and our faith would come together to make one completed whole, their lives of faith not complete apart from ours.

Hebrews 11: 39-40

God's call to step out in faith has played havoc with my expected plans for the immediate future. And no doubt, it has caused some chaos in the life of Eastminster. A holy season, already busy, and then add end of year business, new year beginnings; it feels overwhelming. This is not the season I would have chosen for risk-taking. I like order. Plans. A destination. It is only when I silenced the voice in my head and opened my whole being to the Spirit that I was reminded that the very essence of faith is stepping out in to the unknown; it is about taking risks. It is about letting go of fear and embracing the truth that God created order. God has a plan for all creation. Together again with our Creator is our destination. As I move into this new season of ministry, my brothers and sisters in Christ, I will continue to pray that the Spirit so stirs within you that you will have no doubts about the ministry path that God is setting before you and that you all will, with your whole beings, follow in faith trusting in God's timing, God's order, God's plan and God's destination.

In leaving, I want to share with you some words from The Right Reverend Michael B. Curry. He writes: Verna Dozier, in her book *The Dream of God* says this about faith:

Faith implies risk. The faith view of reality is frightening in its openness, so institutions are always trying to control reality with doctrines and laws and creeds. Kingdom of God thinking calls us to risk. I will live by the best I can discern today. Tomorrow I may find out that I was wrong. Since I do not live by being right, I am not destroyed by being wrong. The God revealed in Jesus, whom I call the Christ, is a God whose forgiveness goes ahead of me, and whose love sustains me and the whole created world. That God bursts all the definition of our small minds, all the limitations of our tired efforts, all the boundaries of our institutions.

The only way to follow Jesus is by faith. And that's not easy because in a very real sense you know that you do that you got to gamble on God. Gamble on God. I don't mean in a casino. I gamble every time I get on an airplane. I don't particularly enjoy flying; I do it because I have to, and I know it's reasonably safe. But the truth is when I get on the plane, I don't usually look in the cockpit to actually see if anybody is in there. I pretty much take it on faith that there's a pilot or two pilots in that cockpit. Sometimes the pilot speaks before you take off, and sometimes they don't. Sometimes you never hear from the pilots at all. And yet we all get on the plane and actually trust that there's a pilot flying that plane and that that pilot is in relatively good shape and should be

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flying that plane. Have I had any proof that that's the case? Not one iota. Have I had any shred of evidence that that's the case? Not one shred of evidence. And yet I get on a plane and let somebody take me up to 34,000 feet, somebody I have never seen and sometimes somebody I never hear from.

Faith is a gamble, but it's not a crazy gamble. It's a gamble on the God who loves us, a gamble on the God who has given us life, a gamble on the God who has shown us the way to live in love and compassion, in decency and kindness. It's a gamble that the God who created us knows how to show us how to live.

You keep the faith. Keep the faith when you feel like it and keep it when you don't. Keep the faith. Keep the faith when you think you know what you're doing, and keep the faith when you don't. Keep the faith on the mountain top of exaltation, and keep the faith in the valley of humiliation. You keep the faith in the God who has faith in you, who has given you life because he has faith in you. And that faith will keep you.

God's children, my friends in Christ, from my heart to yours and from our hearts to God, we pray: Be thou our vision, Lord; this day and every day, the center of our lives, the focus of our thoughts. Be thou our wisdom, Lord and the inspiration of our words. In every situation, may your Spirit be our support. Amen.

Pastor Sherry



In the Pulpit

January

- 1: Fred Watkins
- 8: Blair Garret
- 15: Denise Odom, , Pastor at Presbyterian Village.
- 22: Jesse Light-Wells, Campus Minister at SMU
- 29: Lynnette Solomon, Chaplain Baylor-White Institute for Rehabilitation Dallas

WORSHIP IN JANUARY 2023

Part of the Worship Committee's job is to find pulpit supply in the Pastor's absence. Rest assured that we will accomplish this. The Presbytery Liaisons will help with this task.

The liaisons will also work with the Session to find regular pulpit supply, interim, and a Pastor. The Session members will be in prayer for God's guidance as the Session performs this job, as well as working hard to do their regular tasks. Session will keep the Eastminster community advised of their progress. Watch for updates in the newsletter, emails, and bulletin inserts. And, be sure to keep Eastminster in your prayers for God's guidance.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me: fred.eastminster@yahoo.com or call or text 972-523-2136, or ask in person. You may also talk with any of the Worship committee members: Chandra Anderson, Denise Bennett, Jimmy and Susie Fielding, Michele Pappas, Steve O'Neil, and Sean Turner (Elder).

Fred Watkins, Elder
Chair Worship Committee



Are you taking care of your soul? As Christians we take care of our bodies especially since we believe that the triune God dwells in us or, as first found in Isaiah, the Hebrew word Emmanuel meaning God with us. We also look beyond the physical to work to make ourselves more like Christ. Some call it soul care. Our New Year's resolutions about improving ourselves and our life in Christ should not be made on January First and then ditched a few weeks later. Top priorities in our lives should be our faith (soul care) and our health. God's work, especially that involved in helping others with their spiritual and physical needs, needs our healthy faith and health.

Some resolutions that will help us grow in our faith are as follows:

1. **Pray more!** Many of us don't pray very often and some perhaps only when in the worship service. We know that God knows our inward self but, as Jesus said and offered the prayer example, God prefers us to be in contact.
2. **Worship!** "Where two or three are gathered in my name..." God is there. The New Testament tells us many times that we should be together to worship and praise God. Eastminster is like a family and the family's time to praise and thank God is in person in the regular Worship Services and the many other opportunities to praise God. There is power in us gathered to worship which increases the Spirit in us during worship and beyond in our daily lives. You may not feel different, but God is there.
3. Besides Worship, **we need to be together** in Church School and in other group meetings. As humans, God gave us the need to be with and connect to others. We can do that with our church family, with our family, and with other non-church connected groups.
4. **Helping others.** Yes, we do a lot at Eastminster during the year, with Saturday Breakfast, Food Pantry, Christmas Village, Presbyterian Children's home, Sunday Breakfast and many other settings. The volunteers at the Saturday Breakfast have learned that many people are lonely and just need someone to listen to them. Many of us are the same way. Whatever your people skills, there is a group that needs your help. Just your physical presence helps.
5. **Study!** We need to study God's Word. We need to discuss God's Word with others. We need to have our faith challenged to strengthen our beliefs. God speaks in many ways, such as reading and hearing The Word, through listening to others, reading other religious writers, and through each of us as we worship, study and express our faith through discussion and perhaps very important – action.

Want a way to start the new year? Then be here on January 1st for worship at 10:55 a.m.. It is a unique Sunday. In the lectionary it is the First Sunday of Christmas. Here at Eastminster in our observance of Holy Days, it is Epiphany Sunday because Epiphany occurs on Jan 6th. Usually, we celebrate Holy Days on the nearest Sunday. However, this year January 8th is the Baptism of Jesus, so we are celebrating Epiphany on January 1st. **Epiphany** has, according to Merriam-Webster three meanings: 1) a sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something.; 2) an intuitive grasp of reality; 3) an illuminating discovery,

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realization, or disclosure. Most of us have experienced all three. The most common experience is that of an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure.

Epiphany celebrations **started in the Eastern branch** of Christianity. The exact date is unknown. The Roman historian/soldier Ammianus Marcellinus, a Greek, wrote in his *Rerum Gestarum, Book XXI, Chapter 2* that the emperor Constantin went to a Christian church on Epiphany to hide the fact that he was still worshipping the pagan Gods. He made an offering, said a prayer and left. In the Western church celebration shifted from the Eastern celebration of Jesus' birth on January 6th to the celebration of the Magi (which in Greek means Magician, but not like we think of one). The Eastern Church celebrates Three Kings Day on January 14th.

We celebrate Epiphany with carols and anthems and liturgy. These center on the idea of Jesus as the Light of the World. That is one way to look at the sudden realization aspect of Epiphany's definition. That came about through the Star the Magi saw in the sky. In modern times we sometimes see it expressed as the light bulb suddenly going on in a cartoon head or other depictions with the light above the head. Another way is music, as with our congregational songs, such as *We Three Kings* and in the anthem *Star of Glory* (which you will hear on January 1st).

The change from Magi to wise men to three kings took a few hundred years. At times there were 2 to as many as 12

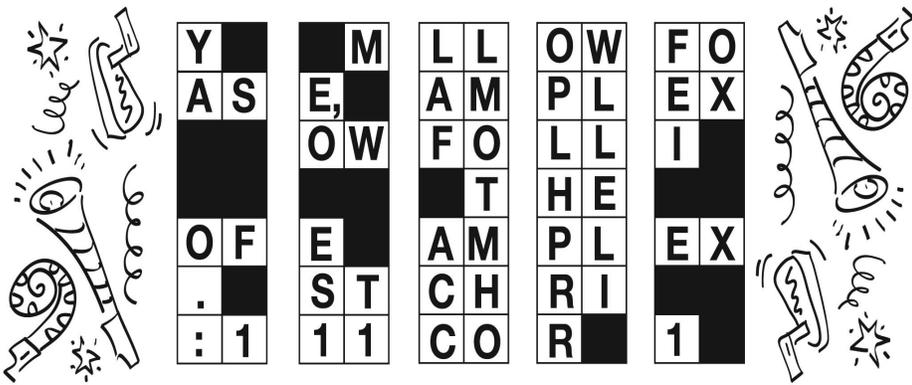
kings, but by the 8th century the Venable St. Bede (d.735) wrote in his *Excerpta et Collectanea* (Excerpts and Collections), "The magi were the ones who gave gifts to the Lord. The first is said to have been Melchior, an old man with white hair and a long beard...who offered gold to the Lord as to a King. The second, Caspar by name, young and beardless and ruddy complexioned...honored Him as God by his gift of incense, an oblation worthy of divinity. The third, black-skinned and heavily bearded, named Balthasar... by his gift of myrrh testified to the Son of Man who was to die." From that writing to this day the original New Testament Greek Magi changed officially to Kings.

Join us on January First Epiphany Sunday to hear and sing the story once again and perhaps you will have an epiphany from God to firm up your "soul care" resolutions!



Puzzle!

Match the blocks of spaces and letters to complete an NIV Bible verse about an important commitment.



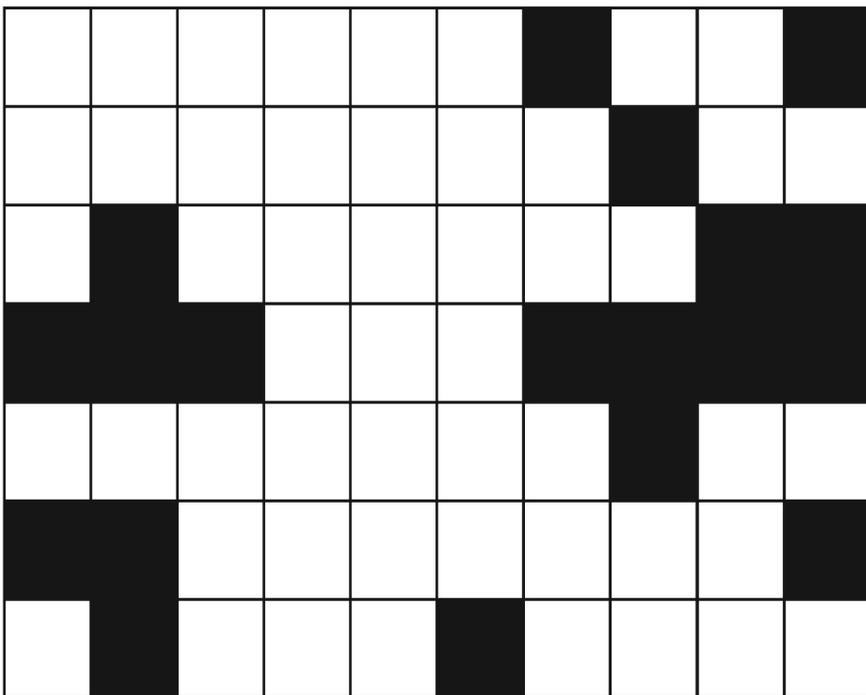
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Writing our life — with God's help

A journalist once said you can measure the quality of a piece of writing by the quality of what has been cut. No matter how beautiful or interesting a phrase or sentence is, the piece may be stronger without it.

Rabbi Evan Moffic applies this wisdom to life in general. Too often we refuse to let something — a habit, a memory, a process — go, even when it no longer serves us. Thinking of our life as a book, we can cut out, edit or rearrange some pages or sentences to reflect our new learnings and growth.

This is not always easy, but we don't have to do it alone. "God is our 'editor-in-chief,'" says Moffic, "and we are part of God's story. [While] God ... gives us free will to decide what to write on the pages of our lives, ... God is always there for conversation and consultation. And God left us a great guidebook called the Bible. Its lessons make our writing shine with truth and beauty." With God's guidance, what will you "write" in the new year?

Answer: Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Cor. 11:1



Neighborhood Breakfast Update

	Guests	Servers	Total
Dec 3	46	6	52
Dec 10	46	4	50
Dec 17	41	12	53

The numbers continue to be up in the 50s. We have several regulars who show up every week. The word of mouth is generating more and more walk-ins. We are also starting to get more and more families with 4 or 5 family members. It is a lot of fun to see the little ones eating Christine's pancakes. Also to see and hear the kids running around and playing with each other. We did gather to serve on both December 24 and December 31. People are still hungry and lonely on holidays. Also, both books and clothing have been eagerly sought and are going fast. Any replacements we get are greatly needed. This is a great time to go through your closets and bring us what you are not using.

Tom



Support Eastminster while you shop!

Ask your family and friends to use this link while Christmas shopping on Amazon: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/75-1968087>

Big news! Eastminster has been added to Amazon Smile's list of charities. Eastminster will receive 0.5% of qualified purchases made on SmileAmazon.com with Eastminster Presbyterian Church of Dallas as the designated charity. This does not cost Eastminster anything! All you have to do is shop on Smile Amazon rather than Amazon and choose Eastminster, otherwise your shopping experience stays the same. This is an easy way to support all of our ministries, like Christmas Village which is right around the corner! We serve our community every week by serving a free, delicious hot breakfast to anyone who comes. You can bless others while doing your Christmas shopping! This link is also available on the church website, go to eastminsterdallas.org, scroll down and click on the Go to smile.amazon.com box, it will take you to your Amazon account and you can choose Eastminster as your charity or you can set up an account if you don't already have one. If you don't shop on Amazon, but your family or friends do, they can easily choose Eastminster, too! God has blessed us with this opportunity to increase our capacity to care for our members and neighbors so take advantage of it! Spread the word and Merry Christmas!

This link will take you directly to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/75-1968087) in support of Eastminster, you won't have to search among almost a million other organizations. <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/75-1968087>

Baptism is serious business!

Baptizing people into God's family has always been a ministry highlight for Pastor Stan Purdum. One Sunday, he had the privilege of welcoming three infants and two young boys to the baptismal font, along with all their parents. After baptizing the babies, Purdum turned toward the families with older children, who'd been instructed to have their boys step forward one at a time.

Immediately, the 3-year-old shouted, "Not me!" and bolted for the exit. His father caught the youngster and carried him back as the congregation chuckled. This time, Purdum wasted no time completing the sacrament.

"Maybe this young boy was not greatly wrong to try to duck baptism," he later pondered. "Far from being a harmless little ceremony, baptism begins a lifetime commitment to God, which over the long haul is no easy thing. It lays upon us the responsibility to live up to the vows we have made." How seriously do you take your baptismal vows?

Pursue Jesus — and your passions

If you struggle with making and keeping resolutions, you're not alone. It can be discouraging to focus on what you're doing "wrong" and all the difficult changes in store. Yet January offers great opportunities to listen to God's direction. After all, Jesus came to give us abundant life and wants us to pursue him.

As you review the previous year, ask: What brought me joy? How did I grow? How did I help others? What did I do that no one else could have done? Whether your list includes spending time outside, mentoring or coaching young people or making crafts to give away or sell, continue doing

what brings you joy. God gives us each unique gifts and circumstances, so live passionately for him this year!

—Janna Firestone

Time for a spiritual assessment

"Hardly anything else reveals so well the fear and uncertainty among [people] as the length to which they will go to hide their true selves from each other and even from their own eyes," says A.W. Tozer. For insights into who we really are as Christians, the theologian proposes "rules for self-discovery." According to Tozer, "we may be known" by these seven things: what we want most, what we think about most, how we use our money, what we do with our leisure time, the company we enjoy, who and what we admire, and what we laugh at.

The "wise Christian" will find other tests, says Tozer, but these are a starting point to reveal if our desires and priorities conflict with God's will. "Our self-judgment is almost certain to be biased and imperfect," he adds, yet there's "every good reason for us to work along with the Holy Spirit in his benign effort to locate us spiritually in order that we may make such amendments as the circumstances demand."

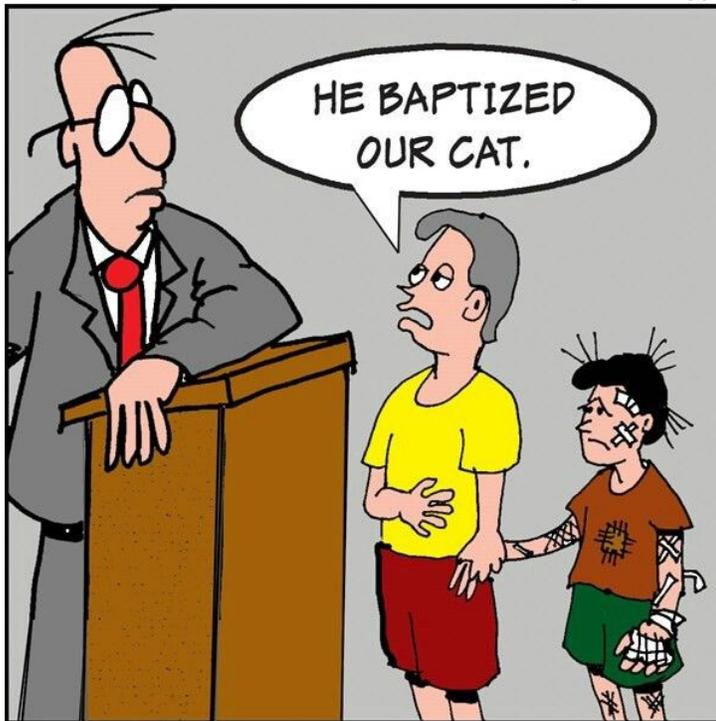


How old was Abram when he followed God's call to leave Haran and travel to a new land?

- A. 25
- B. 50
- C. 75
- D. 100

Answer: C (See Genesis 12:4)

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



What did Jonah's family say when he told them about what happened before reaching Nineveh? "Hmm, sounds fishy."

What was Moses' wife, Zippora, known as when she'd throw dinner parties? "The hostess with the Moses."

What did the classmate say when asked why they kept walking next to the same person at school? "I was told I'm supposed to walk by Faith!"

What did pirates call Noah's boat? "The arrrrrrrk."

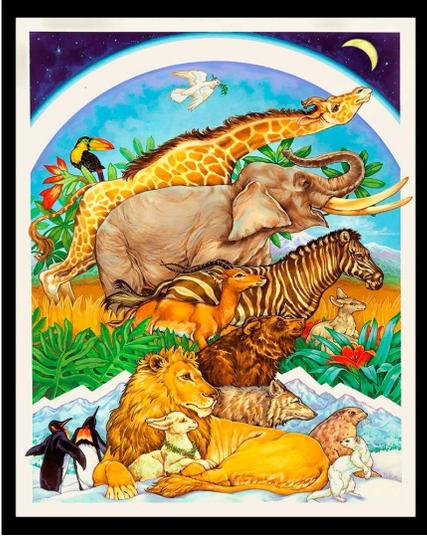
How are toddlers and those who attempted to build a tower to Heaven similar? They all babble.

Scripture Readings for January

1 Pss. 98; 150	12 Pss. 97; 147:12-20	23 Pss. 57; 145
2 Pss. 48; 145	13 Pss. 51; 148	24 Pss. 54; 146
3 Pss. 111; 146	14 Pss. 104; 149	25 Pss. 65; 147:1-11
4 Pss. 20; 147:1-11	15 Pss. 19; 150	26 Pss. 143; 147:12-20
5 Pss. 99;	16 Pss. 135; 145	27 Pss. 88; 148
6 Pss. 72; 148	17 Pss. 123; 146	28 Pss. 122; 149
7 Pss. 46 or 97; 149	18 Pss. 15; 147:1-11	29 Pss. 108; 150
8 Pss. 104; 150	19 Pss. 36; 147:12-20	30 Pss. 62; 145
9 Pss. 5; 145	20 Pss. 130; 148	31 Pss. 12; 146
10 Pss. 42; 146	21 Pss. 56; 149	
11 Pss. 89:1-18; 147:1-11	22 Pss. 67; 150	

God's peaceable kingdom

Once in a while — too seldom, it seems, but often enough to give us hope — Isaiah's prophecy comes true: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion will feed together ... The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together" (Isaiah 11:6-7, NRSV).



In February 2022, a Minnesota photographer captured a rare event: a wolf and a deer lying feet from each other in the snow — and neither was eating the other! Occasionally we hear

of Palestinians and Israelis partnering to teach peacemaking skills, a rally protester helping an injured counter-protester, a crime victim and perpetrator embracing. A divorced couple I know, deeply estranged, decided they could sit together at their son's high school graduation to demonstrate their love for him.

In a world sadly torn apart, glimpses of mending, tolerance and love are signs of God among us. Isaiah (11:6) declares what makes such goodness possible: "A little child shall lead them." We know this child as the babe of Bethlehem, Jesus.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"If you can't fly, run. If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl, but by all means, keep moving."

—Martin Luther King Jr.

"Life, with its rules, its obligations, and its freedoms, is like a sonnet:

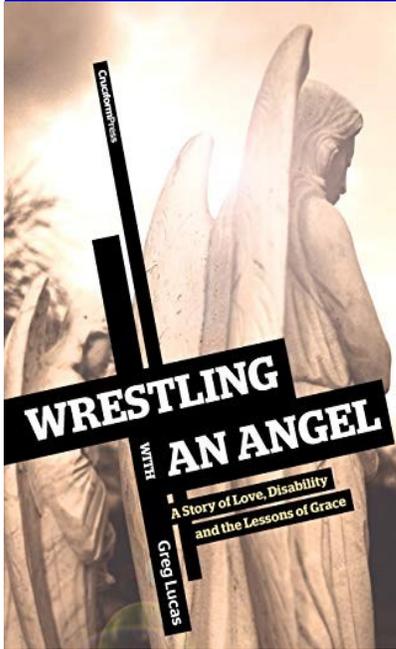
"You're given the form, but you have to write the sonnet yourself."

—Anna Quindlen, "An Appreciation," in *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle

Fresh starts

I suppose when we wake on January 1 the world will look the same. But there is a reminder of the Resurrection at the start of each new year, each new decade. That's why I also like sunrises, Mondays and new seasons. God seems to be saying, "With me you can always start afresh."

—Ada Lum



Fatherly goodness

In *Wrestling With an Angel*, Greg Lucas describes the challenges of parenting a son with special needs. Bathing, for example, is a dangerous, two-person job due to constant resistance. The struggle makes Lucas wonder how to “care for someone ...

who opposes your very presence, even when that presence is necessary for his good.”

Lucas admits he, too, has a disabling diagnosis — sin — and hates “being cleaned.” But our gracious God “will not stand by when I am in need, even when I resist his compassion and care.” His son’s counterintuitive defiance reminds Lucas of the cross. On Calvary, “divine love overpowered my rebellion and forced upon me a process of cleansing redemption that I did not want to undergo.” Even when we fight the process, our heavenly Father’s unconditional love wins out.



Leave the light on

“We’ll leave the light on for you,” a motel chain once promised. In other words, they were expecting you and looking forward to your stay.

During the time of the high priest Eli, “the lamp of God had not yet gone out” (1 Samuel 3:3). Eli oversaw the tabernacle, so some people say this refers to an actual lamp. But the passage could have a deeper meaning. Although Eli had turned a blind eye to his sons’ sins and neglected his duties, God knew that Eli could still be a divine instrument. God knew not to turn off Eli’s light. God was expecting Eli to still shine brightly for him, and eventually Eli figured out that Samuel, his young charge, was hearing God’s voice.

So if your light seems dim or even burned out, be assured that your pilot light remains on! God has left the light on not just for you but also in you. —Julie Lee

I am convinced that love is the most durable power in the world. It is not an expression of impractical idealism, but of practical realism. Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, love is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. To return hate for hate does nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate and evil, and this can only be done through love.

—Martin Luther King Jr.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Vicki Thiebaud	1-2
Jo Byrd	1-4
Elizabeth Kelleher	1-5
Judy Moreland	1-5
Ian Venegoni	1-5
Janice Bell	1-12
Jan Anderson	1-14
Dick Knox	1-15
Tom Pappas	1-16
Sophia Veloz	1-30
Lois Byrd	1-31



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Susie & Jim Fielding	1/26
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Eastminster Session

Chandra Anderson
 Betty Crabtree
 Blair Garrett
 Philis Knox
 Dick Knox
 Jim Lee
 Tom Pappas
 Charlotte Turner
 Sean Turner
 Fred Watkins



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 18, 2022

- ◆ Enjoyed a meal provided by Tom and Michele Pappas.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer regarding losses and projections for budget shortfalls.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer regarding increased insurance premiums for 2023.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Worship Committee regarding pulpit supply for January 2023. All Sundays have now been filled.
- ◆ Heard a report from House and Property regarding meetings with real estate professionals concerning the value of the Eastminster property. These inquiries are being made on an informational basis only.
- ◆ Heard a report from Blair Garrett concerning meetings with the Pastor and with pastors from First Presbyterian Church Garland and First Presbyterian Church Mesquite to discuss what ministry looks like in their communities.
- ◆ Elected the following members to fill positions: Treasurer – Cindy Garrett, Assistant Treasurer – Jim Lee, Financial Secretary – Chandra Anderson, Assistant Financial Secretary – Tony Bennett



Special dates

- ◆ New Year's Day, January 1, 2023
- ◆ Epiphany, January 6, 2023
- ◆ Baptism of the Lord, January 8, 2023
- ◆ Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 16, 2023
- ◆ Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2023

