

# The Messenger



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December 7, 2022



## Moment's Reflection

*"In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born . . . ." -Matthew 2:1*

As much as we try to keep politics out of it, politics is intricately woven into the fabric of the Christmas story. Jesus and Herod will be at political odds from the beginning when Herod insists that power is a precious commodity to be won and kept, while Jesus will grow to advocate serving, not being served.

Matthew says Jesus threatened Herod's power. Herod's murderous plot to quench his insecurity will serve a painful illustration that Jesus' kingdom is governed by different rules. While Jesus will offer peace, Herod will double down on brass-knuckles attempts to keep the peace. Jesus will operate by a principle of expansion, Herod by reduction. Jesus will embrace others. Herod will kill others. Jesus will go outside the city limits to engage others. Herod will silence critics, and circle the wagons.

In some ways Herod makes the dilemma of choice too simple. Few will adore a king like Herod. He'll cross the line and come clearly marked. The problem is it's possible to practice Herod's destructive methods of "peace-making" (reduce, reject, coerce, demand respect, resign to insecurity) in the most seemingly benign, acceptable ways.

Doing Christmas "Jesus style" will require intention. And it's not hard to understand. The difficulty will be in the practice of it. And while the practice may involve gift-giving, the best gifts will be those of the heart we choose to share with those around us. Such as:

Thinking kindly of the person who's hurt you. Better yet, speaking kindly. Retribution pays poor dividends.

Inviting someone into your closed circle of fellowship. Exacting allegiance kills community.

Refraining from acting on angry impulses. The collateral damage that such anger produces is almost always more destructive than the perceived offense.

Considering a way to give grace, even if you feel in your heart it isn't deserved. Grudge bearing shrinks the spirit over time.

The point is that the practice of Christmas "Jesus style" is a choice. It's possible that you can go on straddling the ways of two kingdoms and nobody will notice. Otherwise good people have lived like this for years. But maybe this is the year to try something new. Instead of nursing old wounds, and telling dusty stories, maybe this is the year to come alive to the practices of God's kingdom. It seems to me that is the only way that Jesus will be born to you. -Advent 2022



## COMING EVENTS!

**Sunday, December 18, 6 p.m.**  
Annual Children's Christmas Pageant  
Tasting Party to follow the pageant.



**Christmas Eve (Saturday evening,  
December 24)**

Communion and Carols, 7 p.m.



**Christmas Day Worship**

Sunday, December 25, 10 a.m.

## Disciples Women

**You** are a vital part of our  
Disciples Women Ministry.

**THE GRACE OF GIVING**  
Theme: Shoot for the Stars  
Speaker: Laurie Dodd  
Memorabilia: Friends a Treasure

January 9	9:30am	Morning Circle
January 10	6:30pm*	Evening Circle
*Childcare will be available for this session		

### Reminder

DWM North Texas  
Association Brunch  
Sat., December 10 at  
10:00am.

## Christmas Pageant December 18th

*Whose Birthday is it  
Anyway?*



**A Children's Christmas Program**

Phyllis MacLay

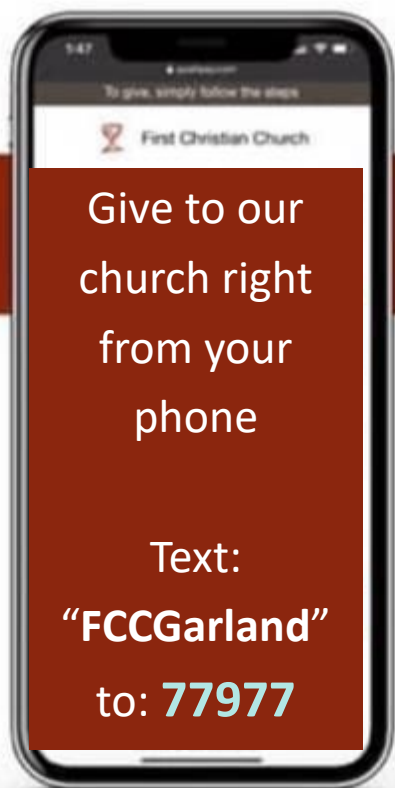
Mark your calendars for December 18<sup>th</sup> to come see this year's Christmas Pageant. Our director is Amber McMillan and Sherri Brown is coordinating music. There is no practice on December 11 because we have several families out of town that day. We will practice on December 18 during Sunday School. The play will begin on December 18 at 6:00 pm. We will have a festive reception coordinated by Fellowship Ministry in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the play. Our reception will feature a birthday cake for Jesus.

Based around the familiar song "The Friendly Beasts", this short program brings us the true message of Christmas through the words of two donkeys, three doves, four cows, and four sheep. Their reflections reassure a young boy who wonders if we all have forgotten "whose birthday is it anyway?"



# Thank you for giving generously

Your Pastors thank you for the generous ways that you support the Pastor's Emergency Needs Fund. Through the years, this year no exception, your money goes to help people in time of deepest need. If you've already given, bless you. If you would like to consider a gift, earmark it Pastor's Emergency Needs Fund. Your gift will make a difference.



REMEMBER First Christian Church Garland has online giving set up through Pushpay.com

You may text FCCGARLAND to 77977 and our church page will pop up on your screen. You may designate "Give one time" or set up a recurring payment. Additionally, you may choose where you wish your offering to go. Just click the ↓ on the Fund menu and a drop down will appear giving you several choices including the poinsettias we offer each year during the Advent season. If you have any questions you may contact Elaine Roeger or Matt Prestenberg.

# Spiritual Development Offerings

Looking for a way to stay connected to your church? Log on to some of our spiritual development courses. Have questions? Confused about how to get the Zoom link to work? Contact the church office at 972-272-5423.

## STUDY OF GENESIS—THURSDAYS AT 12:00PM VIA ZOOM

REV. DR. DOUGLAS SKINNER INVITES YOU TO  
JOIN HIS CONTINUING BIBLE STUDY.

# GENESIS

## UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

**December 18th @ 6:00pm**  
**Christmas Pageant**

A reception will follow

**January 8th**

2023 New Year Kickoff  
Details To Be Announced

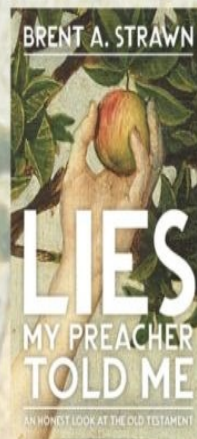
## Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

December 18th  
11:00am - 12:00pm

## NEW STUDY

MONDAYS AT  
7:00PM VIA  
ZOOM

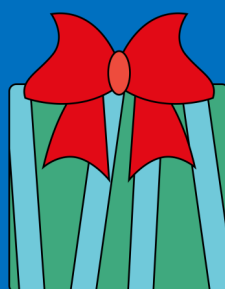
WITH DR.  
SHAUN  
BROWN



BASED ON  
THE BOOK  
*LIES MY  
PREACHER  
TOLD ME: AN  
HONEST LOOK  
AT THE OLD  
TESTAMENT*

## Mike's Kids

FCCG will be collecting donations for Mike's Kids once again this year. This program supports children and families who have been abandoned or forced out of their homeland to a new country. It is time to begin filling boxes with clothing (appropriate for South Texas), new underwear (child sizes), toys (new or gently used), and food for the Mike's Kids around the Los Fresnos, TX area.



Final pick up of all the donations is scheduled for  
**Monday, December 12th**  
and **Tuesday, December 13th**

## prayer REQUESTS

### Circle of Fellowship

Cindy Kyle  
Carrie Lee Simpson  
Tracey Stone

### Fishers of Families

Linda Wimbish  
Debbie Youngkin

### Hands of Faith

Brenda Crosthwaite  
Glenda Lee

### Shepherds

Sharon Campbell  
Patty Crow

### The Grapevine

Melody Biffle  
Allison Owens  
Laurie Owens

## Advent EVENTS

DECEMBER 16TH  
LAST DAY FOR  
POINSETTIA ORDERS



DECEMBER 18TH  
6:00PM  
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



DECEMBER 24TH  
7:00PM  
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE



DECEMBER 25TH  
10:00AM  
CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

## IN SYMPATHY

We give our condolences to Melody Biffle  
and Bryce Biffle on the loss of

**Keith Biffle,**

who passed away on November 14th  
following complications from recurring  
leukemia.

A memorial service is planned for Saturday,  
March 25th at 11:00am at FCC Garland.



Please extend a welcome to **Robert & Lynn Fisher** who joined by reaffirmation of Christian faith, Sunday, November 27. The Fishers have four adult children and several grandchildren. Robert and Lynn moved here last year from Tulsa, OK, where they were active members of the Harvard Avenue Christian Church.