



THE COMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of Atascocita Presbyterian Church



INVITING THE INTERRUPTIONS

I drive a Subaru Ascent. Watch out for me. Christmas is coming. As soon as I can, I find a radio station that plays Christmas music. Whenever and wherever I drive, I have my holiday classics as a constant companion. That's all well and good until Santa Claus starts coming to town and everyone starts rocking around the Christmas tree. When that happens the lanes of traffic seem to grow much smaller, and I find myself twisting and turning my steering wheel in a way that is often quite embarrassing. But that's not the worst. When a carol comes on, something like "O Come, All Ye Faithful," "O Holy Night," or that song so many of us associate with the candlelight service at church, "Silent Night," well when those songs come on, my eyes swell with tears and driving becomes difficult. Those sacred songs of faith that tell of the birth of Jesus interrupt whatever mood I am in and whatever thoughts are on my mind. They bring me to a place of worship and wonder. When I listen to Christmas music, I am inviting the interruptions. I want those songs of our Savior to interrupt me, to draw my focus and attention toward the great gift of salvation.

Christmas music is one of my great interrupters. Christmas cards are also high on my list. As December draws us close to Christmas Day, cards start arriving in the mail. Talk about welcome interruptions. Time and distance instantly fade away as we have a brief moment of connection with friends from far and near. Christmas cards remind us what an incredible blessing it is to have such warm and tender experiences of friendship.

Church is one constant interruption. The sanctuary gets decorated. The Advent Wreath is set up, complete with the candles of hope, joy, peace, and love, with the Christ candle at the very center of the wreath. We decorate the trees with the Chrismon ornaments. Poinsettias arrive, bringing their bright and vibrant colors. We gather for times of worship. One interruption after another. What a blessing! Each and every one of the interruptions is God's way of reminding us what Christmas is really all about.

The last time I sang "Silent Night" was a perfect example of an unexpected interruption that led to a beautiful moment. I love every time I sing

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Stay Connected!

Visit the [APC website](http://apchumble.org) (apchumble.org) for more information and service schedules.

Make sure you are subscribed to *The Communicator* newsletter and Narthex News email.

Check us out on Facebook!
facebook.com/AtascocitaPresbyterianChurch

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“Silent Night,” but this particular time is one I will never forget. It was during our trip to the Holy Land in April of 2022. We were in Bethlehem. We visited the Shepherd’s Field where we sang, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” Next, our tour guide Sami led us in a rousing rendition of “Angels We Have Heard on High.” My heart filled with joy when Sami tilted his head back and let out the most glorious “Glo-----ria” you have ever heard. Like the shepherds, we left the field and made our way to the little town of Bethlehem. Entering the Church of the Nativity, a sense of reverence and awe filled our hearts.

Out in the large sanctuary Julie opened her Bible to Luke 2 and read about the census declared by Caesar Augustus and the road-weary travelers we know so well, Joseph and Mary, coming and delivering to us all the gift of the Christ Child. As she finished reading, we were ushered into the special place where the birth of Jesus is commemorated. We made our way as a group down to that sacred spot. On bended knee our group members touched the marker and offered prayers. And then we sang, “Silent Night.” Because we sing “Silent Night” with candles at our Christmas Eve service, it was nice that there were many candles in that small room that had been lit in remembrance of the birth of the Christ Child. Imagine a moment like that. It was so peaceful and wonderful.

Suddenly the mood was interrupted. One of the men traveling with our group leaned against the candles and his shirt caught on fire. The group responded immediately, using our booklets to put out the flames. Obviously, our singing was interrupted by this near disaster. And then one of the women serving as a host picked up the song and led us back to the peaceful words of “Silent Night.” When she finished, as if that blessing was not enough, another woman then sang that holy song in Arabic. Now I am not saying I’m glad our friend’s shirt caught on fire. Not at all. That was a scary moment. And yet somehow in God’s amazing ability to work all things together for good, that moment when we were interrupted as we sang “Silent Night” will be with us all whenever we hear those precious words, “Christ the Savior is born.”

I’m like most everyone else. Normally interruptions bother me. But something about Christmas interruptions is different. Christmas interruptions serve as a reminder that all the focus on shopping and eating and parties and presents can keep us from experiencing the fullness of the incredible gift of Jesus Christ. And that is something I do not ever want to miss. So in these days of December, I will be inviting the interruptions.

With the love of Christ,

Wayne

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence - as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil - to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

Isaiah 64:1-2 NRSV

Worship in December

12/3 “O that you would rend the heavens and come down”

Isaiah 64:1-9

12/10 “Comfort, O Comfort my people”

Isaiah 40:1-11

12/17 “The year of the Lord’s favor”

Isaiah 61:1-4

12/24 “Here I am”

Luke 1:26-38

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
7 pm**

12/31 “Godspeed”

Luke 2:25-32

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor.....Pastor Wayne Eberly

Office Coordinator.....Carroll Hebert

Director of Music.....Joe Weir

Pianist.....Carl Braden

Pastor Wayne is in the office Monday through Wednesday, from 9 am until 2 pm.

Carroll Hebert is in the office Monday through Friday, from 9 am until 2 pm.

**Church office will be closed
Tuesday, December 26**

Children's Faith Formation Classes

Children K - 5th grade. Classes meet at 9:30 am in the orange classroom.

Pre-school - 2-4 years old. Classes meet at 9:30 am in the teal classroom.

Nursery care will be open each week during FF and worship hours for children who haven't yet entered Kindergarten. Sundays 9:30-11:30 am in the nursery.

Please feel free to contact Terri Thomson with any questions or concerns related to APC Children's Ministries by email (apcchildrenscommittee@apchumble.org).

Youth Faith Formation

Youth 6th - 12th grade. Come and join our exciting new Sunday morning meeting time at 9:30 am.

We will be studying God's word, building friendships and faith, and exploring how we can reach out with God's love.

Contacts for the Youth program are Terri Thomson, Joe Breda, and Julie and Wayne Eberly.

Time Out for Men

The second Wednesday of each month, APC men are invited to join Pastor Wayne in a program that gives everyone a chance to have fellowship, share a meal, and grow together in faith. We will not meet December 13 but **look forward to our time together Wednesday, January 10.**

Meet at 11:30 am in the fellowship hall to share a potluck lunch with Presbyterian Women who meet for their monthly Bible study. Then, at noon, the men's group will gather in the parlor for their fellowship.

Adult Faith Formation

*****Doug's class, 9:15 am in the library.**

Dec 10 finishing *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, by John Walton. Dec 17 beginning *Messiah Jesus: Christology in His Day and Ours*, by Doug Kennard.



*****Sermon Scripture Study, 9:30 am in classroom 102/hybrid.**

Everyone is welcome for a discussion of Sunday's worship scripture.

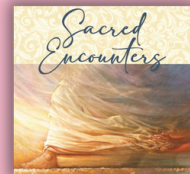
*****Christian Chat and Coffee, 9:30 am in classroom 104.**

Everyone is welcome for an easy hour of discussions and fellowship.

Presbyterian Women Horizons Bible Study

The December PW meeting will be our Annual Christmas Luncheon on **Wednesday, December 13** from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm, at Judi Anderson's home, 7603 Prairie Oak Trail in King's River (approximately one mile from the church).

The Bible Study is from 11 am until noon covering chapter 4 in the Horizons series: *Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus in Luke-Acts*, by Olive Mahabir.



The luncheon is from 12:00 until 1:00 pm. Judi will have the smoked turkey breast and would like to ask others to bring either a salad, a side dish, bread, or dessert. **Please RSVP to Judi (jla.lpc55@gmail.com)** if you are coming and what dish you will bring.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sleep in Heavenly Peace
Bed Pickup and Delivery

Saturday, December 2. Meet in the church parking lot at 7:30 am (instead of meeting at FP). Load your truck and get a delivery route for the beds at 8:30 am.

Empty Nesters
Christmas Gathering

Meeting the fourth Tuesday of the month. The group will meet **Tuesday, December 5, 6 - 8 pm** at the Craig's house. Bring an appetizer to share and a beverage of your choice. For more information, please contact Ellen Nipe (enipe@comcast.net).

Poinsettias Benefit
Music and Youth



Poinsettias will help decorate the sanctuary during the Advent season.

You may purchase one or more "in honor of" or "in memory of" your loved ones. Price is \$15 each. All proceeds will benefit the music and youth programs and can be for any amount you choose.

A sign-up sheet is in the narthex to list your dedications. Drop a check (with "poinsettias" or "music fund" in the memo line) in the offering plate, or the church office. **Last available date is Thursday, December 6.**

Commemorative APC
40th Anniversary Ornament

On display in the narthex, the price is \$10 to benefit the Music and Youth programs. See Joe Weir or Carroll Hebert in the office.



Please indicate "ornament" on the memo line of your check.

APC Needlers

Meet the second Tuesday each month. The next meeting is **December 14, 7-9 pm** at Rosemary Mumford's house.

Bring needlework thread and supplies for a new project.

For more information, please contact Karen Frye (vkfrye62.kf@gmail.com) or Rosemary Mumford (rosesmum@aol.com).

Carols of Christmas
AHS Madrigal Singers



APC welcomes the Madrigal Singers for their annual "Carols of Christmas" concert **Thursday, December 14, 7pm** in the sanctuary. Tickets are \$15 which includes the concert and a dessert reception.

Web sales are not currently open for this performance. Call Atascocita HS Choir at 281-641-7606 for more information.

Game Day for Grownups!



Gather for a potluck lunch and fellowship **Thursday, December 28, 11:30 am**, in the fellowship hall and stay for games of Mexican

Train or Bingo. For more information, please contact Terri Parmerlee (tmaparmerlee@gmail.com).

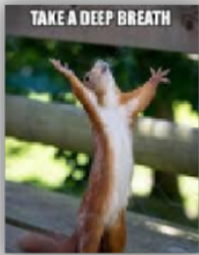
Seniors and Friends

See you in January for lunch and fellowship at a local restaurant!

Ancient Mariners

Our first Harris County precinct bus trip of 2024 is **Friday, January 12 to Minute Maid Park**. The tour takes about two hours and the cost is \$20 per person. After the tour, we will have lunch/dinner at a local restaurant to be determined. The release form requires your signature and must be returned to Linda Andrus by December 22. For more information, please contact Linda (harley3064@aol.com).

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Yoga for all!

Meet Monday mornings at 9:30 in the fellowship hall. Bring your exercise mat.

Live Nativity Program Friday, December 8 and Saturday, December 9



The Program is from 6 until 6:30 pm both nights on the stage in the GATE area.

The Celebration is from 6:30 until 8 pm featuring a variety of

activities for the entire family in the GATE area. Enjoy coffee, hot chocolate, cookies, children's nativity sets for sale, scent tasting of frankincense and myrrh, an accapella choir, Santa's mailbox, a petting zoo, and a photo booth to capture the event with your family.

The food truck, "Moon Rooster," will be here from 5 until 8 pm serving salads, tacos, and hot dogs.

Volunteers are needed to assist with the activities. For more information, please contact Sandra Berry (713-447-7719).



Advent at APC

Sunday morning worship 10:30 am

December 3, The First Sunday of Advent, The Candle of Hope
Sermon: "O that you would rend the heavens and come down" Isaiah 64:1-9

December 10, The Second Sunday of Advent, The Candle of Peace
Sermon: "Comfort, O Comfort my people" Isaiah 40:1-11

December 17, The Third Sunday of Advent, The Candle of Joy
Sermon: "The year of the Lord's favor" Isaiah 61:1-4

December 24, The Fourth Sunday of Advent, The Candle of Love
Sermon: "Here I am" Luke 1:26-38

December 24, Christmas Eve Service, 7 pm

CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH THESE SPECIAL EVENTS

Christmas Cantata, Sunday, December 10

APC Chancel Choir will present "A New & Glorious Morn!" during the morning worship service.



Advent Devotions can be downloaded from the APC website (apchumble.org). A few printed copies are available in the narthex. The daily readings begin Sunday, December 3.

Support APC With Your End of Year Giving

Atascocita Presbyterian Church has had a rich and wonderful year together in 2023. We have welcomed the Eberly family into the life of our church, welcomed new members, began new ministries, and continued to faithfully give ourselves to the witness and work of God's kingdom.

As 2023 draws to a close, we encourage you to consider the church with your end-of-year giving. Forrest Craig, who gives his time so generously as our Financial Secretary, has compiled some very helpful information about special types of giving, including Qualified Charitable Donations and the giving of Appreciated Stock. This information is available through the church office. You can also make a simple end-of-year donation to help us meet our 2023 budget.

In a year when God has richly blessed our congregation, we are praying that we might each consider an end-of-year gift to celebrate the life of faith we share here at APC.



The graphic features a purple and blue color scheme. At the top left is a purple cross-like symbol. To its right, the text reads: "CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS" in bold, followed by "CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE" and "Sunday, December 3 - 24" in blue. Below this is a blue and purple illustration of a baby in a manger. To the left of the illustration, the text says "What child is this?" in large, bold letters, and "THE PERFECT GIFT." in smaller letters below it.

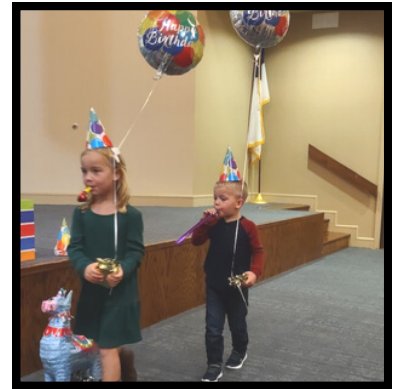
The Christmas Joy Offering supports church workers and their families in the PC(USA) who need critical financial assistance. APC has the opportunity to make an impact. You can be the difference between financial hardship and a blessed breath of relief.

In addition, the Christmas Joy Offering is committed to helping promote educational opportunities and leadership development, in Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of

color. We can enable these institutions to provide students with a transformative education.

Information brochures are in the pew pockets as well as donation envelopes. Drop cash or check (indicate "Christmas Joy" on the memo line) in the offering plate on Sunday or anytime through the APC website (apchumble.org). Click on "Give Now" to view the options there.

Scenes from APC 40th Anniversary Celebration





HAAM NEWS

SEASONS OF SHARING

CHRISTMAS EMPTY STOCKING GIFT CARD AND TOY DRIVE

To bring joy to families in need this holiday season, HAAM is requesting donations of gift cards and toys. Also, monetary donations are acceptable. Due date for all donations is Sunday, December 10, 2023.

Gift cards: since most toy donations are for younger kids, HAAM is recommending donations of \$25 Target or Walmart gift cards to give to older kids. Please note that Gift Cards should be hand-delivered to George Williams or Carroll Hebert.

Toys: If you prefer donating toys, please place them in the HAAM donation box or under the Christmas Tree in the narthex.

Monetary Donations: You can make monetary donations by visiting the secure HAAM [website](https://haaministries.org) (haaministries.org).

All donations are due by Sunday, December 10, 2023!

Thanks for your continued support of HAAM!
George Williams (281-772-4706)

Earth Care Corner

Daily Advent Devotional from Presbyterians for Earth Care

New Daily Advent Devotions based on the Revised Common Lectionary texts from Creation Care Perspectives. This devotional will help provide new insights on these beloved texts during this special season. The devotions should inspire more people to help care for God's creation in these challenging times.

Two formats are available on the Presbyterians for Earth Care website <https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aids/> - online version and printable version. [Click here](#) to download your copy.



Two Webinars from Presbyterians for Earth Care

Sustainable Holidays: Celebrating Christmas with a Focus on Earth Care

Presented November 14, a discussion of the ecological issue of world-wide deforestation, what we can do about it, and ways to lessen our impact on the earth. A special focus was given to [One Tree Planted's updated list](#) of 15 ways to celebrate the holidays with more of a focus on caring for our natural environment. The webinar recording and resources are available at <https://presbyearthcare.org/sustainable-holidays/> or by [clicking here](#).

Travel Choices and Our Future: A Transportation Webinar

What is the most ecological choice for transportation?
For long distances, is it flying, traveling by car, traveling by hybrid, traveling by EV, traveling by motorcycle?
Which produces the most greenhouse gas emissions? Which produces the least?
What factors contribute to a decision on transportation choices?
When can the United States expect to have a mass transportation system available nationwide?
This webinar, that was presented August 24, on transportation covered the answers to these questions and more. The webinar recording and resources are available at <https://presbyearthcare.org/travel-choices-our-future/> or by [clicking here](#).

APC is a certified Earth Care
Congregation of the PC(USA).



Birthdays

12/1 Jimmy Humlick
 12/3 Travis Harshaw
 12/3 Susan Phillips
 12/4 Wayne Eberly
 12/6 Joe Weir
 12/8 Debbie Becker
 12/10 Jane Frieders
 12/10 Sue Grawl
 12/11 Brian Clary
 12/11 David Gerald
 12/12 Jackson Clary
 12/14 Frank Fitzpatrick
 12/15 George Williams
 12/21 Harry Brookby
 12/21 Gary Denmon Jr
 12/24 John Parmerlee
 12/25 Nati Peterson
 12/26 Dick Bruns
 12/31 Don Treleven

Prayers, Concerns, & Condolences

We lift prayers to the Lord for friends and family:

- Peace and safety for the people of Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan, and in other parts of the world.
- Prayers for the people of Israel who are suffering through the attack on their nation; for the innocent civilians in Gaza who are caught in the crossfire of the war; for our nation as we seek to stand against all acts of racism and anti-Semitism; for each one of us to live out our call to be peacemakers.
- Victims, families, and communities affected by violence.
- Those impacted by recent natural disasters.
- Petra, friend of Heather Pritchett and Sandy Lee, being treated for cancer and other health concerns.
- Vicki Lasinsky recovering from surgery and David Lasinsky, medical concerns.
- Adam Clark and all our service men and women for peace and safety.
- Maggie Pritchett, Heather and Robert's daughter, in active military service. 2nd LT in medical school at F Edward Hebert School of Medicine at Uniformed Services University in Bethesda MD.
- Nancy Davis, sister of Cathy Fovargue, additional surgeries, continued healing. Continued support by her husband.
- William Fitzpatrick, Frank and Barb's son, recovery from pulmonary embolism.
- Joe Weir recovery from surgery.
- Robert Mikel, dad of Elaine McCool's friend, recuperating from surgery.
- Mason Courville, Janice McCormick's 18 yr old grandson, needs a heart transplant.
- Alison Brookby, Harry and Judy's daughter-in-law, breast cancer surgery Dec 6.
- Ongoing concerns: Sine McCarty, Garland McCarthy, Betsy Gould, Anne Wallace, Michael Burgos, Ann Owen, Connie Brown.

Please email prayer requests to the church office (apc@apchumble.org).

For pastoral care emergencies, please contact your deacon or elder for December, Sandra Berry (713-447-7719).

Worship Attendance and Offering Summary

Date	In Person	BoxCast Live	Facebook Live	Total Viewers	Offering Total
5-Nov	110	8	26	144	\$6,882
12-Nov	137	12	29	178	\$7,090
19-Nov	95	14	43	152	\$1,953
26-Nov	112	11	37	160	\$1,341
November End of Month Credit Card Receipts					
Total Offerings for Year-to-date					\$273,188
Budgeted Offerings for Year-to-date					\$256,847

"GOD PROVIDES"

APC Stewardship Update

Thus far we have received 53 pledges totaling \$253,804. We are grateful that of that list there are 13 new pledges, and many of our continuing pledges represent a significant increase. We will continue to update you about our progress regarding the 2024 budget.

Our hope is that any members or friends who have yet to pledge will do so in the next few weeks, so that by December we will have an accurate number we can use in making our final plans for the 2024 budget. If you have turned in your pledge already, a big thank you. If you have yet to turn in your pledge, know that your commitment is important to us and will help us carry out the ministries of the church as we seek to be a beacon of hope and light in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord.