



●●●● ————— **ATASCOCITA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
THE COMMUNICATOR

JANUARY 2026 EDITION

This Month from Pastor Wayne
Bittersweet

“Don’t touch those cookies, Wayne.” My mom just made a batch of her famous oatmeal chocolate chip cookies. The smell of those cookies had drawn me into our kitchen. But it wasn’t time yet to eat the cookies, so my mom told me not to touch those cookies. Then to be sure I could not touch the cookies she put them on the counter, safely out of reach. I was four years old. I could not even see the top of the counter, much less reach it. The cookies were safe. Seeing that the cookies were safe my mom left me in the kitchen and headed off to fulfill yet another of her endless duties keeping a young family functioning. My mom left me in the kitchen...alone...with the chocolate chip cookies.

No sooner had she left than I set my mind to tackling the problem before me. The cookies smelled good. The cookies were on the counter. I was standing on the floor, barely knee high to a grasshopper. How could I get from the floor to the cookies? Ahhh...my young eyes noticed a cord hanging down from the counter that was home to the coveted cookies. If I just grabbed that cord and pulled myself up, the cookies would be mine. I grabbed the cord and pulled. Unfortunately, the cord was attached to the coffee pot. Equally unfortunate, and actually quite dangerous, the coffee pot was filled with extremely hot coffee. When I pulled the cord, the pot tipped over and the hot coffee scalded my leg. The burns were severe.

That must have been sometime in late spring. What I remember is that my burned leg was bandaged. The pain was constant. And yet the lingering pain from the burn was nothing in comparison to those days when my mom would take me to the doctor, who would proceed to remove the old skin. It must have broken my mother’s heart to hear me scream in agony.

To make things worse, my leg was bandaged all summer, meaning I could not go in the water. Summer in the central valley of California is filled with days well over 100 degrees. Swimming is the one escape from the heat. Here I was, four years old, and I could not swim for the entire summer. It was like being in timeout for the whole summer. Unable to swim, my leg wrapped in an uncomfortable bandage, subjected to regular visits to the doctor where I experienced the excruciating pain of the removal of the old skin and the cleaning of the wound, that summer was a bitter time for little Wayne.

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Our neighbors had a pool. They would invite all the Eberly kids to come swimming on hot afternoons. My siblings would frolic and play, splashing and shouting “Marco Polo” with their friends. I watched. I really was in timeout. I could not get near the pool for fear my bandage would get wet, which would be disaster. It was a miserable summer. It was a bitter summer. But for about ten minutes every hour, there would be a brief time of relief. Our neighbor’s dad would come out to the pool once an hour and tell all the kids to get out of the water. They would clear the pool. When it was all safe, he would turn to me and say, “Wayne, now it’s your turn.” For those few minutes, I would put my good leg in the water. I couldn’t move at all, for fear of splashing onto my bandage. But I could put that one good leg in the water. I have to admit I sort of felt like a king. My summer-long timeout was temporarily halted. For just a brief moment I had the pool all to myself. In a summer that was largely bitter, those moments with my leg resting in the pool were sweet. Those moments were incredibly sweet.

Our neighbors that summer, our neighbors the whole time we lived in Hanford, California, were the Ramms. Mr. Ramm was that lifeguard who was a lifesaver, clearing the pool for me to have a fleeting respite from my bitter summer of bandages. Anyone who has ever heard me preach a sermon has heard about Mr. Ramm. Mr. Ramm was not only our neighbor, he was also a pillar of our Presbyterian church. Mr. Ramm was a huge man, especially from the perspective of a little boy. And his hand was gigantic. I know. I would get lost in that hand every Sunday morning. Showing up to church, a little guy trying not to get under everyone’s feet, Mr. Ramm would notice me. He would call out my name with his warm and welcoming voice. And then he would extend that gigantic hand and shake mine, like I belonged at church...Like I had a place at church...Like I was part of the family at church.

Looking back on my bitter summer so many years ago, that summer of being in timeout, I realize my memories are no longer bitter. Oh, it was a painful and difficult time. Nevertheless, my memories are not bitter. I remember my mom, who chose not to chastise me for my bad behavior in grabbing that coffee pot. Instead, she would hold me close and comfort me during those dreaded visits to the doctor. I remember Mr. Ramm, oh do I remember Mr. Ramm. The word sweet hardly does justice to the memories I have of Mr. Ramm. Maybe that is what is so sweet about something that is bittersweet. Because the bitter is present, because the struggle is so real, the pain so sharp, the sadness so overwhelming, just the simplest act of kindness can seem so sweet. A mother who holds your hand. A neighbor who makes a place for you at the pool. Somehow the bitter fades and the sweet lingers.

As we enter a new year, there will undoubtedly be bitter moments, bitter seasons, bitter experiences, and bitter losses. Of course there will. Every year brings its own challenges. My prayer for us is for God to open our eyes to see the blessings that are present in these bitter times. Two verses to hold onto when times are bitter:

“Weeping may remain for the night, but joy comes in the morning.” Psalm 30:5
“You have turned my mourning into dancing.” Psalm 30:11

May the God who is able to bring joy and dancing out of our weeping and mourning fill our lives with sweet and tender moments that soften the bitterness of life and remind us that the love of God is always near.

With the love of Christ,
Wayne

Note: This article in itself is bittersweet. On Tuesday, December 22nd, I received this note from Susan, Mr. Ramm’s daughter. “I wanted to let you know that the Lord called my dad home this afternoon. He passed peacefully in his sleep. Dad was a blessing to so many over his 96 years. He and my mom celebrated their 74th anniversary this year. I miss him already but am comforted knowing he is rejoicing with the Lord.”

I thank God I had the blessing of knowing Mr. Ramm. May God hold him close in his arms of eternal love.



Messages for January

January 4

"God Will Devise a Way" | II Samuel 14:14

January 11

"My Son" | Matthew 3:13-17

January 18

"The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah" | Matthew 1:1-17

January 25

"The King of the Jews" | Matthew 2:1-12

The first NYC ball drop was in 1908, and it's a time for fresh starts and resolutions.



Office Hours

Pastor Wayne Eberly

Mon-Wed
9 AM – 2 PM

Rhonda Blake

Mon-Fri
9 AM – 2 PM

Church Staff

Pastor - Reverend Wayne Eberly

Office Coordinator - Rhonda Blake

Director of Music - Joe Weir

Pianist - Carl Braden

Director of Creative Learning Center - Cathy Gerald

JANUARY EVENTS



Empty Nesters

January's gathering will be on Tuesday, January 6 at 5:30pm

Location: Fuzzy's Tacos & Margs
4360 Kingwood Drive (In the old Fuddrucker's). Contact Nancy Anderson at nancy.anderson56@yahoo.com

TUESDAY

6

JAN



Presbyterian Women's Bible Study

Join us Thursday, January 8 at 11:30am for study & conversation. Contact Linda Andrus harley3064@aol.com.

Location: Fellowship Hall

THURSDAY

8

JAN



Family Promise

APC will host Family Promise families from **January 11-17**. Volunteers are needed to provide dinner, serve as overnight hosts, or donate grocery supplies.

Sign-up in the Narthex.

THE WEEK

11-17

JAN



Time Out for Men

Luncheon for the men of APC will be on January 13, 2026, at 12:00pm

Location: Fellowship Hall.

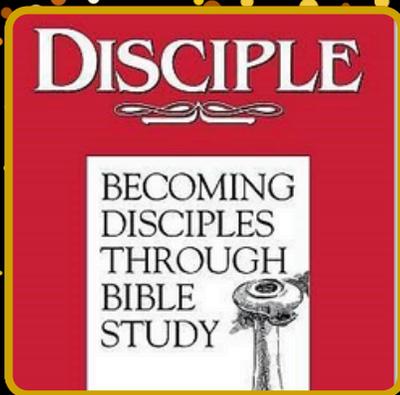
Please contact Pastor Wayne for details.

TUESDAY

13

JAN

JANUARY EVENTS



Disciple Bible Study

Beginning January 14, 2026 Disciple Bible Study with Pastor Wayne will begin exploring the New Testament, each Wednesday from 12pm – 1:30pm. **Location: Fellowship Hall.** Contact Rhonda in the Church Office: apc@apchumble.org.

WEDNESDAY

14

JAN



Sr. & Friends

Location: Nara Thai in Atascocita on Lake Houston Parkway

Join us for good food & warm fellowship. Sign-up in the Narthex. Contact Bonnie Carr with questions at: bnccr1@gmail.com

THURSDAY

15

JAN



Session Meeting

Church Session will be meeting following Worship.

Location: Fellowship Hall.

SUNDAY

18

JAN



Game Day, Grownups

Our next Game Day for Grownups is January 22 at 10:00am. Don't forget your snacks! Contact Terri Parmerlee (tmparmerlee@gmail.com) or Linda Andrus (harley3064@aol.com)

Location: Fellowship Hall

THURSDAY

22

JAN

BLESSING BOX UPDATE

The Blessing Box continues to be generously supported by the community.

Thank you to everyone who has donated and helped spread the word about this ministry. While food items are often the focus, toiletries and other essentials are also greatly appreciated.

Donations may be placed directly in the box. If the box is full, items can be dropped off in the church office during business hours.

The box is checked regularly and restocked several times a week.

Items Always in Need

Food & Pantry

- Canned proteins (chicken, tuna, etc)
- Canned beans
- Canned vegetables
- Grab-and-go snacks (granola bars, baby food/applesauce pouches, chips)
- Easy mac
- Canned pastas (Chef Boyardee, Spaghettios)
- Dried milk
- Rice
- Cereal
- Spices

Toiletries & Cleaning

- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Feminine hygiene products
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Dish detergent
- Laundry pods



Contact Jamie Hannan for more information at jameshannanjr@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE

Rise

AGAINST HUNGER

EXPERIENCE

After worship on February 22, 2026, everyone is invited to stay for lunch and join in a meal packing event with Rise Against Hunger. Our goal is to have at least 40 volunteers pack 10,000 meals in about 1.5-2 hours!

That's enough meals to feed 47 children for an entire year. Please watch this video on their website to find out more on what to expect:

<https://fplh.org>

The Mission Committee will be utilizing funds from the Mission Jubilee Fund and Mission budget to support this worthwhile project. We greatly appreciate the support of the congregation. There are jobs for our youngest and most senior friends so we hope everyone can join.

Childcare will be provided for those who need it.

Registration is appreciated ahead of time so we can get an idea of how many folks will be coming. [Please follow this link to register.](#) You will see there are a handful of folks needed before and after the event for set up and tear down. There will also be opportunities to register in the Narthex if you need help with the online registration. You can also register on the day of the event if needed.



HAAM Update

Humble Area Assistance Ministries 2025 Seasons of Sharing

Christmas Giving

Thanks to the congregation, CLC parents, and the Presbyterian Women for your donations of gift cards and toys. **APC donated over 90 toys and 49 gift cards, plus \$100.** This was the **largest number of gift cards** ever collected.

Way to go APC!

Youth Sponsored Meal Kits Project

Thanks to all who supported this project by donating food and helping bag the meal kits. **HAAM picked up 54 meal kits!**

Thanks to the youth and adults who sponsored this project.

Thanksgiving - *Correction

*Correction from last month: over **300 lbs.** of food were delivered to HAAM.*

 Questions about HAAM? Contact George Williams at 281-772-4706.

 **Thank you for your continued support of HAAM!**



On December 13, **Sleep in Heavenly Peace** made **history with the world's largest single-day bed delivery** event. **158 chapters nationwide, 3,268 beds delivered to children in need, 1,422 families served, and 2,773 volunteers.** This represents a 45% increase in beds delivered and 177% surge in volunteer engagement compared to 2024. Thanks to every volunteer, donor, and partner who made this possible.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace will not be delivering beds in January, but will start again in February.

Our congregation generously donated **40 Seafarers Christmas Boxes for 2025.** They were delivered to the Seafarers Center at the Port of Houston, and at that time, a total number of boxes from all the **Congregations in the Houston area was 5,390.** Thanks to all of you in sharing your gifts and time in spreading Christmas cheer affecting a worldwide Christian Ministry.



December 2025 Attendance & Offering Summary

2025 Worship Attendance and Offering Summary		
Date	Attendance	Offering Total
7-Dec	115	\$5,534
14-Dec	121	\$24,643
21-Dec	95	\$10,403
24-Dec	182	\$2,561
28-Dec	80	\$2,837
Total Offerings for Year-to-date		\$316,147
Budgeted Offerings for Year-to-date		\$368,289



A NOTE FROM THE

earth care team

A Fresh Start for Creation Care

January is a natural time to reset our habits and begin the year with intention. Even in Houston's mild winter, small choices can make a meaningful difference for God's creation. This month, we invite you to explore simple ways to reduce waste, conserve energy, and live more mindfully.

Energy-Saving Winter Habits

- Lower your thermostat 1–2 degrees when you're away or sleeping
- Switch to LED bulbs in lamps and outdoor fixtures
- Unplug chargers and small appliances when not in use
- Open curtains during the day for natural warmth; close them at night to keep heat in

Recycling Refresh

- Rinse containers before recycling
- Flatten cardboard boxes
- Keep plastic bags out of curbside bins
- Reuse glass jars for storage or leftovers

Low-Waste Living for the New Year

January is a great time to simplify. Small, consistent steps help reduce what we send to landfills and encourage mindful stewardship.

- Bring reusable bags to every store
- Choose refillable or concentrated cleaning products
- Use cloth napkins or towels instead of disposables
- Donate gently used coats, blankets, and household items

Daily Creation-Care Practices

- Take shorter showers to conserve water
- Turn off lights when leaving a room
- Walk or bike short errands when weather allows
- Support local farmers' markets for seasonal produce

A Shared Commitment

As we begin 2026, let's continue growing as a community that cares for God's world with gratitude and intention. Every small act adds up.

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY

Our Youth Bible Study group is filled with gratitude for all that God has done in 2025. This past year brought meaningful conversations, deeper friendships, and moments where our students discovered new ways to see God at work in their lives. We are thankful for every young person who showed up with curiosity, honesty, and a desire to grow. Their questions, insights, and willingness to support one another have shaped a truly special community.

We look ahead to 2026 with excitement and expectation! We believe God has so much in store for our youth - new studies, new opportunities to serve, and new ways to strengthen their faith.



December Highlights



Christmas 2025



Joy!



Presbyterian Womens Bible Study



Children's Moment
Nativity



Advent Cookies



Christmas Eve Candlelight

December Highlights

Wishing Bulbs



Children
Grandchildren
Kindness
Husband
Life
FurBabies Girlfriend
Wayne & Julie
Friends
Breathe!
FatCats Students
LOVE
Joy! Family
APCI! Reading Nature
Jesus
Laughter
Love Sunrise
Visiting Family

January

Happy
Birthday

Charlotte Nazarko	Jan 4
Daniel Williams	Jan 4
Mike Vance II	Jan 6
Phil Schreiber	Jan 7
Desiderio Tchussen	Jan 7
Elizabeth Frye	Jan 9
Julie Eberly	Jan 11
Ron Powell	Jan 16
Carol Curtis	Jan 19
Kathleen McPherson	Jan 19
Max Pongkorung	Jan 21
Christina Michie	Jan 23
Jeff Berry	Jan 24
Emily Murphy	Jan 25
Ashton Landry	Jan 26
Thomas Mumford	Jan 27
Robert Pritchett	Jan 27
Leah Barnes	Jan 29
Avery Ingram	Jan 29



Happy
Anniversary

Will & Charis Nees

Jan 10

