

THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

JANUARY 2024 / VOLUME 24, NUMBER 1

Make the Most of 2024

Here are some upcoming opportunities for education and fellowship in the new year



Local Service Saturday with Be the Neighbor January 13, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

On MLK weekend we will serve and learn together with Be the Neighbor. We will have conversations about why we serve and work at different mission locations here in Fort Worth. This is open to all ages 4 years old and up along with an adult (4th grade and older can attend on their own). For information, contact Ann Nielsen (anielsen@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 232).

The Upside of Downsizing: Getting to Enough January 21 and 28, February 4 and 11, 1-2 p.m.

What does your future hold? Do you need to think about a new place to live and a different way of life for yourself? This class is not a "how to" class. It is about dealing with feelings, and spiritual and psychological implications of changing your lifestyle for the future. We will be using Sara B. Hart's book that is the title of the class. We will start with 4 weekly meetings and offer future small groups for support as needed. The Rev. Ann Hoch, Ph. D. will facilitate the class. She moved to Trinity Terrace in January 2023 in her early 70s to be close to family (Jane and Dan Sykes) and assure a secure and enriching future for herself and her family. She is excited to help you prayerfully consider and plan for your future.

To receive a book before the class begins, please register at fpcfw.info/downsize by Thursday, January 11.

Bible 101 Q&A with Pastor Brian January 28, 4:30-6 p.m.

As a follow-up to our Bible 101 class in the fall, we will sit down with Pastor Brian to have a Q&A. This is open to all 2nd – 5th graders. Bring your questions! Dinner will be provided. For information, contact Ann Nielsen (anielsen@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 232).



Spiritual Formation classes beginning in January

Lectio Divina

January 7 through March 24
10-11:30 a.m. in Room 238

Do you long to feel closer to God? Have you ever practiced Lectio Divina? Lectio Divina, literally "divine reading," is an ancient way of reading scripture that allows each person, led by the Holy Spirit, to focus on a word or passage that resonates with them. There are four components to Lectio Divina: scripture reading, reflection, prayer, and contemplating. Come practice this deep way of communicating with God. We will use the scripture from each week's sermon. Register at fpcfw.info/lectio.

Shalom

January 7 through February 25
2-4 p.m. in Room 100

This 8-week course will trace God's dream of shalom as introduced in Genesis and fulfilled in Revelation, exploring the richness of shalom blessings and the urgency of human responsibility in co-creating it. The course will examine how, through covenants, law, prophets, Jesus Christ, and the early church, God's dream was both kept alive and revealed in ever greater depth. Register at fpcfw.info/shalom.

Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,

Happy New Year! I love the verse that we read at Epiphany from Isaiah 60:1: "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and

the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." It holds so much promise and possibility that it sounds like it could have been written at the beginning of a new year, millennia ago.

The first word – arise! – calls us to action. In other words, Get up! Look up! Lift up your hearts! As we begin a new year, we can be consumed with what has (or hasn't) been, or with anxiety about what is to be. And, yet, the command "arise" helps us change our gaze. It calls for a different posture, and as the famous and late theologian Jimmy Buffet says, "changes in latitudes bring changes in attitudes." If you bring your gaze to God's possibilities, you begin to see in a different way. Anne Lamont frequently quotes a Catholic priest who said, "Sometimes heaven is a new pair of glasses."

The second imperative is "shine" – which implies that we have the ability to participate in the glory of God. Jesus says that we are the light of the world, and that is true especially in the ministries of First Pres, as we engage in meaningful service and worship and fellowship in all the ways in which God calls us in 2024.

More than new year's resolutions, we see a new way, not just of self-improvement intentions for a new year, but of God-intentions of transformations for a new reality. We see God's lovingkindness, God's faithfulness, that light shining in the darkness which the darkness did not overcome. And guess what? Your radiance is essential to any bright future of God's own imagining.

What we sang as children is true today: Rise! And shine! And give God the glory glory! Thanks be to God: you are the light of the world! May it be so this new year.

Robyn

Submissions

Submissions for the next issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, January 24**. Submissions for the weekly Penn Street Online emailed newsletters are due the **Wednesday prior to each week's issue**. Please send to Pam Burkholder at pamb@fpcf.w.org.

Follow Us

Do you follow First Presbyterian on social media? If not, find us on the following sites and follow along for photos, reminders, encouragement, and more.



@firstpresfw



@firstpres_fw

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First Presbyterian Church's Session

2024 CLASS OF ELDERS

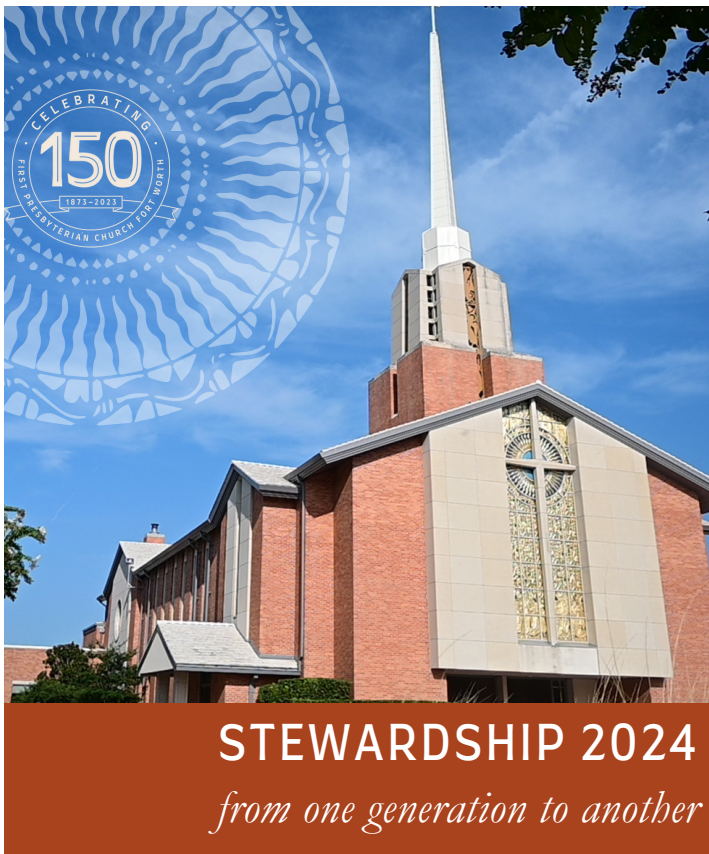
Mary Elizabeth Austin
Sarah Clingman
Lillie Doze
Randall Johnson
Martha Newman
Ralph Reece
Claire Schmid
Dawn Shepard
Austin Stubblefield

2025 CLASS OF ELDERS

Brian Cunningham
Jimmy DeFoor
Mary Susan Farrar
Vic Letbetter
Linda Northern
Lynda Richey
Amy Ryan

2026 CLASS OF ELDERS

Julia Bradley
Al Comeaux
Emily Hadley
Jane Mathis
J.B. Smithson
Jay Stepp
Brian Wharry



Calendar Highlights

Below are some highlights of special events happening in January. For a complete calendar, visit fpcfw.org.

SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

- 8 a.m. Worship in the Chapel
- 9 a.m. Worship in the Great Hall
- 10 a.m. Church School
- 11 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary & Livestream
- 11:20 a.m. WHAM Younger Children's Choir
- 2 p.m. WHAM Worship Arts Classes
- 2 p.m. Spiritual Formation: Shalom
- 2:45 p.m. WHAM Older Children's Choir
- 3:30 p.m. Children's Bell Choir
- 4:30 p.m. High School Bells
- 4:30 p.m. Middle School Youth Group
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Dinner
- 6 p.m. Middle School Bells
- 6 p.m. High School Youth Group

MONDAYS IN JANUARY

- 11:30 a.m. Busy Women's Bible Study
- 3 p.m. Room in the Inn

WEDNESDAYS IN JANUARY

- 5:30 p.m. WOW! Worship and Dinner at Community Crossroads
- 6 p.m. Grace Notes Rehearsal
- 7 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 p.m. High School Bible Study (off campus)

MONDAY, JANUARY 1

- All Day Church Offices, Early Education Center, and Community Crossroads closed

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

- 9 a.m. MOMS Yoga and Brunch

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13

- 9 a.m. Circles of Christ Circle Up for Coffee
- 9 a.m. Local Service Saturday

MONDAY, JANUARY 15

- All Day Church Offices, Early Education Center, and Community Crossroads closed

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16

- 10:30 a.m. PW Tuesday Together

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

- 1 p.m. The Upside of Downsizing
- 6:30 p.m. Taize Worship in the Chapel

Stewardship Update

As 2023 comes to a close, the Stewardship Committee is celebrating the commitments made for 2024. The planned generosity of the congregation for next year is truly inspiring!

To date, nearly \$2.8 million in pledge commitments has been received, with an average pledge of \$6,225. This represents new levels of generosity as together we Inspire Disciples and Engage the World!

Over the next weeks, an additional \$100,000+ in pledges is anticipated from members and friends who make their annual commitment at the start of the new year.

If you have not yet communicated your pledge to the office, you may return your pledge card to the church office, pledge online at fpcfw.org/give, or email Wes Hogue (whogue@fpcfw.org) in the Business Office with your intentions. Know that your pastors are available if you would like to share in conversation about the spiritual discipline of generosity.

Together, our collective generosity witnesses to the incredible faithfulness of members and friends who live out their discipleship as we worship and serve Jesus Christ, who alone is the Head of the Church.

Be Inspired

2025 Elder Class Suggestions

The Nominating Committee is requesting suggestions for next year's elders. Any active member of our congregation may suggest other active members to the Nominating Committee to be considered for nomination. A suggestion does not constitute nomination. However, your suggestions are essential to the work of the Committee.

The spiritual growth and development of our congregation is entrusted to your officers (Ruling Elders). These are not honorary positions or rewards. They are offices requiring wisdom and maturity, exercised in service. The Ruling Elders elected will serve a three-year term beginning January 2024.

You may submit your suggestions online at fpcfw.info/elder-nominations.

Homebound Communion

Are you no longer able to attend worship in-person on Sunday morning? Would you like to receive communion in your home? If you answered yes, we would like to visit you with communion. Please contact Rev. Ashley Drake Mertz (adrakemertz@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231), Parish Associate for Pastoral Care, to be placed on the list for homebound communion.

Gilmont Men's Retreat coming March 1-3

'The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.' (Mark 2.27-28)

Take this time to get away and enjoy dynamic speakers, engaging conversations, moving music, inspiring worship, a walk in the woods, delicious food, adult beverages, fellowship and fun! Drawing from Mark 2:23-28, our keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Perryn Rice, will share why, "Dudes Need a Sabbath!" Rev. Dr. Clay Brantley will lead worship and John Mark Solomon will lead music. Space is limited and lodge rooms fill up fast, so find a friend or family member to share a lodge room with or gather a group of guys to stay with you in a cabin! Learn more and register at <https://www.gilmont.org/mens-retreat.html>.

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Presbyterian Women's Day Retreat coming February 17

Save the date for the annual Presbyterian Women's Day Retreat on February 17, 2024 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This year's theme will be, "Seeking God's Goodness." We will gather at First Pres to enjoy food, faith, and fun! Watch for more details and registration information.



The Westside MOMS (Mothers Offering Mothers Support) group gathered for a pajama party in December.



MOMS (Mothers Offering Mothers Support) is a ministry of First Presbyterian Church for all mothers of children of all ages. Gather with other mothers for support, encouragement, Bible study, fellowship, and friendship. For working moms, stay-at-home-moms, and all moms in between! Come as your schedule allows; no need to attend every meeting or the entire meeting — let MOMS fit your busy life. To learn more about MOMS or get involved, visit fpcfw.org/moms or contact Robyn Michalove (robyn@fpcfw.org) or Ann Nielsen (anielsen@fpcfw.org).

Engage the World

Are you looking for ways to serve our community in the new year?



Room in the Inn

Room in the Inn (RITI) is a coalition of member congregations that provide hospitality for up to 14 men experiencing homelessness in Fort Worth one night a week during the coldest and hottest months of the year. We provide delicious food, a safe place to sleep and fellowship. The purpose of RITI is to build bridges of relationship, mutuality and respect between guests and hosts. It takes a team to offer this hospitality so please consider using your gifts as a disciple to extend a warm welcome to guests this winter.

Winter Room in the Inn runs Monday afternoons from 2-3 p.m. (through February, excluding holidays). We need a few people to join other volunteers in making beds, assembling lunches and setting up our hospitality for Room in the Inn. Please contact Robyn Michalove or Becky Quick in the church office (817.335.1231) if you can serve one week or each week.



Salt and Light Dental Clinic

Did you know we are expanding the number of dental clinics we will offer at Community Crossroads in 2024? We will double the number of clinics, and we need to double the number of helping hands who make this critical ministry happen! Our clinics are on Monday mornings from 8 am – noon, and we may eventually add a Friday clinic. No prior dental experience is necessary for volunteers as the main tasks involve prepping and organizing (we have professional dentists and assistants for the medical part of the clinic). We hope to set up a rotation of volunteers so that you can serve as it fits your schedule. Our current volunteers can train you and show you how enjoyable it is to serve with this fun team while bringing healthy smiles to neighbors in our community. Interested? Contact Robyn Michalove (robyn@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231).



New Year's Resolution: Mentor a 4th Grader with Academy 4

First Presbyterian is excited to partner with Academy 4 at Edward Briscoe Elementary (2751 Yuma Ave, 76104).. Academy 4 partners mentors from congregations with fourth graders who meet together one Friday afternoon a month for 90 minutes. Mentors express love and care and provide the students with a positive relationship with a dependable adult. To learn more or apply to become a mentor, visit fpcfw.org/missionpartners.

Recently Around First Pres

From an Early Education Center Christmas program to a live nativity, a Jingle Bell Run and First Pres staff Christmas Spirit Week, pictured here are some recent First Pres happenings. If you have photos of an event or gathering that you'd like to see included here, share them with Pam Burkholder at pamb@fpcf.org.



Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of December 20. In an effort to respect the privacy of those listed below, names are only printed once permission from the individual is obtained. Are you in the hospital or dealing with an illness? Let us know by contacting Parish Associate for Pastoral Care Rev. Ashley Drake Mertz or Parish Visitors Matt McGraw or Rev. Lynda Dinsdale. Let us keep the following persons in our thoughts and prayers this month...

With Joy, we Celebrate...

The birth of Cash Phillips to parents Ryan and **Katie Cromwell**. Cash was born on November 29, 2023. Cash joins big brother Walker and big sister Taylor. Cash is the grandson of **Tina and Bart Phillips**.

Our Loving Sympathy to...

Family and Friends of **Peggy Scott**, following her death on December 7. Surviving First Pres family members include Peggy's son and daughter-in-law, **C.T. and Julie Scott**; daughter and son-in-law, **Carol and Mark Maness**; and grandchildren **Brian Maness, Emily Boydston, Caroline Maness**.

Family and friends of **Karl Kuipers**, following his death on November 24. Surviving First Pres family member is Karl's wife, **Susie Kuipers**.

Family and Friends of **Ann Simms**, following her death on November 21. Surviving First Pres family members include husband, **John Simms**, daughter and son-in-law, **Julie and Jay Hayes**, and brother-in-law, **Harry Bartel**.

Family and friends of Susan Charles of Chicago, following her death on December 13. Surviving First Pres family members include Susan's cousin **Nancy Knight, Bill Knight**, and **Molly Knight**.

Our Loving Thoughts and Prayers are with...

Betsy Pepper, Jo Ann Johnson, Elizabeth McCartney, Elizabeth Richardson, Ronnie Sherwood, Capt. Rolf Tilley, Pat Richardson, Gail Davis, and Irene Howard, who are recovering from surgery or injury. We also pray for their caregivers.

Karen Hosch, Liz Barber, John Patterson, Henrietta Bailey, Mary Kay Roberto,

Larry Kinard, Amanda Deitz, Levi Deitz, Tad Delgado and parents **Emily and Bryan Delgado, Ronnie Clinkscale, Velma James, June Sprott, Fred Wilson, Frances Blake, Phyllis Propes, Dean Holloman, Chuck Sullivan, Susie Kuipers**, and **Karl Travis**, who are dealing with illness or undergoing treatment. We also pray for their caregivers.

Our Caring Prayers for Extended Family include...

Lucy Redrow (daughter of **Leigh Ann and Grant Redrow**), Lou Hammett (husband of **Carol Sue Hammett**), Katie Loudon (sister-in-law of **Jaci Travis**), Michael Kibby (friend of **Mary Brooks**), Anja Dangelimer (family friend of **Lauren Black**), Claudia Masser (daughter-in-law of **Carol Toombs**), Melanie Carpenter (sister of **Paula Robertson**), Peggy Moore (sister of **Mary Brooks**), Cameron Parmelee (granddaughter of **Sally and Bob Parmelee**), Jack Barber (son of **Liz Barber**), Andy Hedrick (brother of **Patti Bradley**), Jolie Paprskar-Mozingo (daughter of **Joy Paprskar**), Walter Williams (husband of **Rachele Williams**), Caleb James Baker (great-grandson of **Betty Tillman**), Terry James (nephew of **Rachele Williams**), Tahji Hoffman (great-niece of **Rachele Williams**), Paula Perkins (sister of **Susie Kuipers**), Audrey Hart (great-granddaughter of **Bob and Jane Trask**), Ann Welch (sister of **Andrea Frankenfield**), Nancy Hatfield (mother of **Sarah Haddock**), Lynn Prater (daughter of **Harlene Satterfield**); Bill Neil (uncle of **Kenda, Nancy, and Ron Love**), and John DeMore (son-in-law of **June Sprott**)

Prayers for the safety of Pape Russell (grandson of **Barbara Russell**), who is serving in the US Navy. Prayers for the safety of **Diego A. Saldivar** (son of **Becky and Renee Saldivar**), who is serving in the US Navy. Prayers for the safety of Nathan Gunter (nephew of **Russell and Vivian Norment**), who is stationed in Korea.

We pray for safety and peace for those affected by conflict.

We pray for our mission coworkers: Cindy Corell in Haiti, Jed and Jenny Koball in Peru, Cathy Chang and Juan Lopez in Manilla. We pray for our partner congregations: Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist in Fort Worth and for the congregations of Buen Pastor, Resurrection, and Cidra Presbyterian Churches in Cuba.

Welcome New Members!

Please join the Evangelism Committee in welcoming these new members.



Allison and Cliff Eiland joined First Pres on Sunday, December 17. Allison is a CPA and Cliff is a commodity manager in aerospace. They have two sons, Flint, 5, and Talon, 3.



Jean and Done Heineman joined First Pres on Sunday, December 17. Jean, a retired educator, and Don, a retired salesperson, recently relocated to Fort Worth.

First Presbyterian Church

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Lifetime Presbyterian Women Memberships were presented to Oleta Thrower, Mary Susan Farrar, Patty Biggers, and Martha Cunningham (not pictured) at the PW Christmas Celebration on December 12.