

THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

FEBRUARY 2024 / VOLUME 24, NUMBER 2



Lent at First Pres

“Lent is a kind of pilgrimage or journey. Such a journey calls for simplifying things and for traveling light. It is a time for each of us to ask, “what helps me live my faith, and what gets in the way?” Lent is a good time to begin or to enrich devotional reading and prayer disciplines. Lent is a good time to serve the poor and work for justice. Lent is a good time for a spiritual retreat that includes silences, prayer, reflection, and worship. Lent is a good time to ask, “Is my identity rooted in faith, baptism, and discipleship, or is it rooted in something else? If it’s rooted in something else, what do I need to do about that?” Lent is a time to live into a new way of being, with God’s help.

Stevens and Waschevski, Rhythms of Worship, Westminster John Knox Press, 2014. pp .53-54)

The liturgical season of Lent is a period of preparation for Easter lasting forty days (excluding Sundays) that begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. During Lent, First Presbyterian offers a variety of worship, study, and reflective opportunities for the Lenten journey. In this edition of the *Penn Street Letter* you will find more information about Lent Covenant groups and other opportunities for retreats, classes, and gathering.

Ash Wednesday: February 14

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a focus on repentance. Marked with the sign of ashes, we begin with a posture of humility as we focus on God’s love and forgiveness. First Presbyterian offers three opportunities to worship: 12 noon in the Chapel, 5.30 p.m. at Worship on Wednesdays at Community Crossroads (1516 Hemphill St.), and 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary or livestream at fpcfw.org/livestream.

Midday Prayer Services: Wednesdays, February 21 through March 20 at 12 p.m.

These 30-minute services in the Sanctuary offer reflection on the season with prayer, music, and message.

Lenten Afternoon Concerts: Wednesdays, February 21 through March 20 at 12:30 p.m.

Enjoy a 30-minute organ concert by a guest organist immediately following the Noon Lent services. A light lunch will be served after each concert. The concerts and lunch are free with no reservations required. The guest organist schedule is:

- February 21: Devon Howard of Keene, Texas
- February 28: Mitchell Crawford of Boston, Massachusetts
- March 6: Eugene Lavery of Waco, Texas
- March 13: Jordan Smith of Fort Worth, Texas
- March 20: Zvony Nagy of Dallas, Texas

Taizé Contemplative Services: Sundays, February 18 and March 17

These short, contemplative services offer prayer and song in the manner of the the Taizé Community in France. Sundays, February 18 and March 17 at 6.30 p.m. in the Chapel.

If you have questions about Lenten Worship services, Covenant Groups, and other studies and gatherings, please contact the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski in the church office (michaelw@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231).

May we have a holy Lent as we journey toward Holy Week and Easter.

Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,

There is a wonderful old story about a disciple who goes to his master teacher for wisdom and guidance. However, instead of listening to his

teacher, the disciple talked and talked and talked about his life, his problems, and his questions. Eventually, the teacher served the disciple a cup of tea. The teacher patiently poured the tea into the cup until it was full, and then kept on pouring. When the disciple had enough of it, he reacted and said, "Can't you see that my cup is full? It's not possible to get anymore in!" "Just so," the teacher responded, stopping at last, "and like this cup, you are filled with your own ideas. How can you expect me to give you wisdom and guidance unless you first empty your cup?"

Later this month on Valentine's Day, the season of Lent begins. I'm wondering, are you leaving any room for Jesus in your cup? Joan Chittister writes that "Lent is a time for trimming the soul and scraping the sludge off a life turned slipshod. Lent is about taking stock of time, even religious time. Lent is about exercising the control that enables us to say no to ourselves so that when life turns hard of its own accord we have the spiritual stamina to say yes to its twists and turns with faith and with hope."

If you're like me, sometimes you may have a hard time slowing down and emptying your cup. This means that seasons like Lent can slip by our radars. For a moment, let's take a deep breath and reflect on ways we may engage this season in a new way. Our Lenten theme this year is "Table Talk with Jesus." Together, we'll be thinking about ways we encounter our Lord at the table. In Lenten covenant groups or in personal study, some will be reading the new book "Meeting Jesus at the Table" by Cynthia Campbell and Christine Fohr (stay tuned for more details). Or maybe there is another way you want to connect with Jesus this year, perhaps around a table with friends. There are plenty of ways to begin the journey to the Table, to the Cross, and to Easter, and when life happens, remember: it's never too late to begin the journey.

As we draw closer to this holy season, and in all the seasons of life, may you have the strength and courage to get started, leave some room in your cup for Jesus, and know that there's a place at the table for you. May you trust in the God of Second Chances, and may you know and believe at the deepest corners of your soul that God will never leave you and God will never forsake you.

Keep on keepin' on,



P.S. Thought you'd like to know that over Christmas break, 25 young people and adults went on our Youth Ski Trip to Wolf Creek, Colorado. We had a great trip together, and the weather was so beautiful that some of our students skied in their brand-new long-sleeved shirts emblazoned with our new First Pres logo! I sure love this new-yet-old Celtic cross symbol and its hidden reminder that First Pres is so much more than a building! Big thanks to the Communications Committee for all their hard work on this project!

Rev. Dr. Josh Stewart
Associate Pastor for Youth

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

Publisher Info

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Table Talk with Jesus: Lent Covenant Groups

During the season of Lent, several pastors and staff will be leading covenant groups using the book *Meeting Jesus at the Table* by Cynthia M. Campbell and Christine Coy Fohr. Using several gospel readings that represent a range of stories about food and feasting that are centered in the life and teaching of Jesus, our time together will invite us to reflect on what it means to be called to follow Jesus in our own lives individually and as communities of faith. The covenant group experience is an opportunity to journey deeply with these gospel stories, which also shape and form the Lent preaching series on Sundays and Wednesdays - Table Talk with Jesus.

Covenant Groups are offered at the following times and locations:

- **Sundays, February 18-March 17 at 3 p.m. on the Penn Street campus**
- **Mondays, February 19-March 18 at 12 p.m. (lunch included) on the Penn Street campus**
- **Tuesdays, February 20-March 19 at 5 p.m. on the Penn Street campus**
- **Wednesdays, February 21-March 20 at 6 p.m. (dinner included) on the Penn Street campus**
- **Thursdays, February 15-March 21 at 9 a.m. at Community Crossroads**

To register for a Covenant Group, visit fpcfw.org/lentandeaster or contact Deneice in the Church Office (dallen@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231). If you have questions about the covenant groups, please contact the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski (michaelw@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231) in the church office.



Calendar Highlights

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

SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY

- 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
- 2:45 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
- 6 p.m. Grief Group

WEDNESDAYS IN FEBRUARY

- 10:45 a.m. Bible In Depth
- 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)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4

- 11 a.m. Kirkin' of the Tartans Worship
- 12 p.m. Kirkin' of the Tartans Lunch

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

- 5 p.m. Young Adult Social Gathering (off campus)
- 6 p.m. Grades 1-3 Late Night

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

- 5 p.m. Youth Big Game Party (off campus)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

- 12 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship (Chapel)
- 7 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship (Sanctuary & Livestream)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

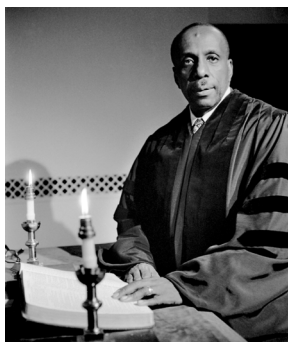
- 9 a.m. Presbyterian Women's Day Retreat

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

- 6 p.m. Youth Overnight Lock-In
- 6 p.m. Grades 1-5 Mystery Late Night

Be Inspired

What Makes You Come Alive? Sundays, March 3-April 4



Howard Thurman

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do that, because what the world needs is more people who have come alive.”
-Howard Thurman

Do you recognize the quote but not the name, Howard Thurman? Would you be surprised that in the early 1950’s Time magazine named him one of the ten most significant religious leaders in

America (a list that also included Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham)?

Now, are you still wondering why you don’t recognize this man?

When the Civil Rights Movement took shape in the United States, Thurman was a nationally recognized human rights advocate, though he did not take to marching and mobilizing in the streets. He preferred to serve as a caretaker and spiritual advisor to those who did, among them Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jesse Jackson, Marian Wright Edelman, and John Lewis. Dr. King was known to carry his Bible and a copy of Thurman’s *Jesus and the Disinherited* with him at all times.

While in India, a meeting with Mahatma Gandhi convinced Thurman and his wife Sue of the nonviolent path. Then while viewing the Kyber Pass they also became convinced of interracial, interfaith worship. Together they would work to facilitate The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples, a church that Eleanor Roosevelt supported in its inception.

A mystic, a prophet, a mentor... Howard Thurman was this and more! Please join this six-week class on *Howard Thurman: What Makes You Come Alive?* as it begins on Sunday, March 3 and continues through April 14 during the 10 a.m. church school hour each week. Kay Love and Karen Hosch will facilitate this study using video and several of Howard Thurman’s books. Register at fpcfw.org/spiritualformation or by calling the church office (817.335.1231).

Grief Group begins February 5

First Presbyterian Church is offering a five-week in-person Grief Support Group beginning Monday, February 5, from 6-7:30 p.m. in Room 100, led by Rachel Rigdon.

This group offers a supportive and encouraging space in which to experience God's presence, comfort, and strength. It is free and open to members and friends of the church and the community. The group will meet weekly on Monday evenings through March 4.

To register, visit fpcfw.org/careandsupport or contact Deneice Allen in the church office (817.335.1231 ext. 261 or dallen@fpcfw.org).



FELLOWSHIP Dinner Groups

Fellowship Dinner Groups are intergenerational groups of church members who will meet from March to November for food and fellowship. and are an excellent way to get to know other members of First Pres!

**Sign up for a group by February 23
at fpcfw.info/dinnergroups.**

Engage the World



Clothing Donations Needed

Community Crossroads, First Presbyterian Church's mission outreach center in Fort Worth's near South neighborhood, is in need of clothing donations. Current needs are:

- **Men's Pants/Jeans: Waist Sizes 28-38, any length**
- **Winter Coats and Accessories (Gloves, Hats), all genders**

You may bring donations to Community Crossroads, 1516 Hemphill Street, or the church office during business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or on Sundays.

Welcome Jennifer Martinez, Director of Community Crossroads



On January 17, First Pres welcomed Jennifer Martinez as the new Director of Community Crossroads.

Jennifer has called Fort Worth "home" for the past 17 years and has not only built an impactful career serving the community, she proudly raised four wonderful children (3 daughters and one son). When she is not working, Jennifer loves to read, work Thomas Kincaid puzzles with her son, and spend

time with her kids. She loves the water and dreams of visiting Niagara Falls and white sandy beaches in person.

Jennifer is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology at Southern New Hampshire University, showcasing her commitment to continuous learning and academic excellence. Jennifer is a dedicated professional with over 9 years of experience in the non-profit industry at a local food pantry. While she began as a food pantry volunteer, she was quickly promoted several times throughout her career and grew into a strategic leader overseeing programs. Throughout her career, Jennifer has been instrumental in contributing to the success of various programs within the non-profit sector. Her passion for community development and social impact has driven her to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those she serves. Jennifer's leadership, compassion and community-focused approach make her an asset to First Pres and Community Crossroads and her commitment to positive change continues to inspire those around her.

Please take a moment to welcome Jennifer the next time you see her around First Pres or Crossroads!



DID YOU KNOW?

Formula and Diapers, a ministry of our congregation at Community Crossroads, distributed 114,260 diapers and 2,121 cans of formula in 2023. We serve 150 children each Monday morning, assisting hundreds of families (already enrolled in WIC) receive basic necessities for their family in a welcoming and hospitable atmosphere.

Upcoming Retreats



Presbyterian Women's Day Retreat February 17 at First Pres

All women are invited to 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, fellowship, and fun! Retreat cost is \$35 paid in advance and includes lunch. Learn more and register at fpcf.org/pw.



Gilmont Men's Retreat March 1-3 at Camp Gilmont

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 www.gilmont.org/mens-retreat.html.



Summer 2024 Save the Dates!

We can't wait for Summer 2024! We are so excited for the ways we will be able to learn, grow and have fun together.

Vacation Bible School

June 17-21 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Ages: 3 years old by January 1 through 5th Grade

Elementary Music and Arts Camp

June 17-21 from 12-4 p.m.

Ages: Entering 1st through 5th Grade

Mo-Ranch Camp

Session 2: June 9-15 and Session 5: July 7-13. Overnight.

Ages: 8-15 years old

Mission on the Move

July 22-26 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

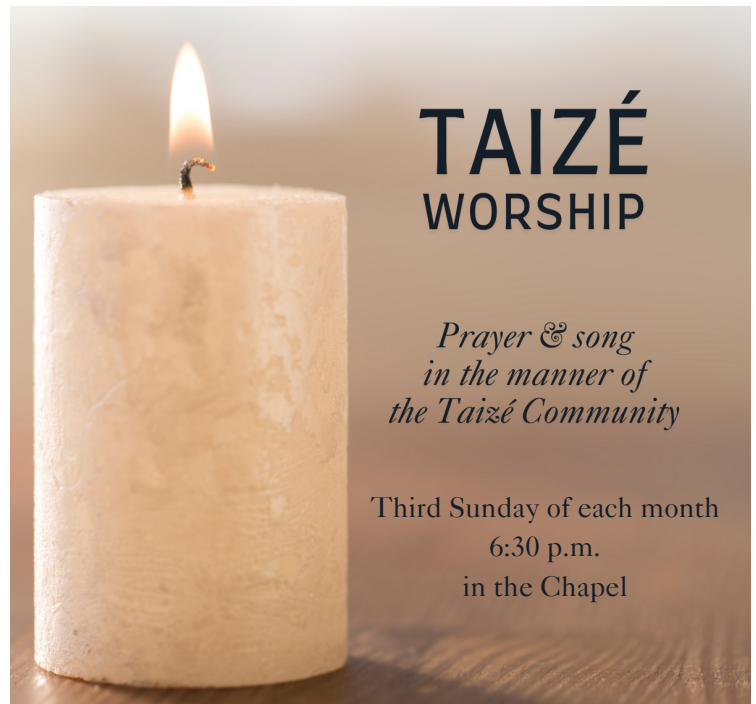
Ages: Entering 3rd – 6th Grade

Pre-K Music and Arts Camp

July 22-26 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Ages: 4 years old through entering Kindergarten

Registrations open March 1! Learn more about our summer activities at fpcf.org/kidsummer



Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of January 24. 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 Benjamin Arthur to parents Lauren and **Will Adams**. Benjamin was born on November 21, 2023. He joins big brother Henry and is the grandson of **Glenn and Melinda Adams**.

Our Loving Sympathy to...

Family and friends of Sharma Hatcher, following her death on January 20, 2024. Surviving First Pres family members include Sharma's daughter and son-in-law **Rhonda Hatcher and Efton Park**.

Family and friends of **Velma James**, following her death on January 6, 2024. Surviving First Pres family member is Velma's granddaughter, **Brandie James**.

Family and friends of Anna K. Black, following her death on December 24, 2023. Surviving First Pres family members include daughter and daughter-in-law, **Audrey Black and Judy Stricklin**.

Family and friends of **Melinda Vance**, following her death on December 29. Surviving First Pres family members include Melinda's daughter and son-in-law, **Kathleen and Toby Galloway**, grand-daughters **Rebecca and Alexandra**, and brother-in-law **Richard Vance**.

Family and friends of **Mary Kay Roberto**, following her death on December 31. Surviving First Pres family member is Mary Kay's daughter **Katherine Roberto**.

Our Loving Thoughts and Prayers are with...

Martha Brooks, Steve Christian, Nancy Gillis, Janet Ragsdale, Jackie Taylor, 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.

Janelle Eklund, Karen Hosch, Liz Barber, John Patterson, Henrietta Bailey, Larry Kinard, Amanda Deitz, Levi Deitz, Tad Delgado and parents **Emily and Bryan Delgado, Ronnie Clinkscale, 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.



Karen and Jim Nelson joined First Pres on Sunday, January 7. Karen and Jim are both retired from the education sector and are PCUSA elders.



Joyce and Paul Williams joined First Pres on Sunday, January 7. Joyce is retired from the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, and Paul is retired from Texas Utilities (now ONCOR). Both are PCUSA elders.

First Presbyterian Church

1000 Penn Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102

PERIODICALS POSTMASTER:

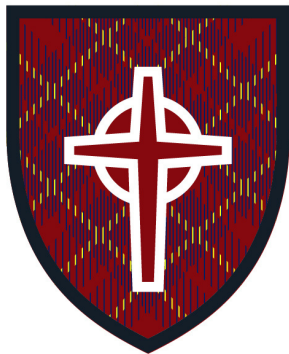
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1000 Penn Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102

Church Office

Ph: 817.335.1231

WWW.FPCFW.ORG

First Presbyterian Church
FORT WORTH



Kirkin' OF THE Tartans

You're invited! Sunday, February 4

Worship at 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary | Lunch at 12 p.m. in the Great Hall

A celebration of the Presbyterian Church's Scottish heritage.

**Wear your family tartan or favorite plaid in celebration
of the day and don't miss this rousing tradition!**