

THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

MARCH 2025 / VOLUME 25, NUMBER 3

LENT *at* First Pres

The liturgical season of Lent is a period of preparation for Easter lasting forty days (excluding Sundays) that begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5. 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.

PICK UP YOUR COPY OF THE "LENT TRAPS" JOURNAL FOR ALL AGES

Our theme this year is "Lent Traps." Each Wednesday and Sunday during the season of Lent, we will focus on a different "trap" that we can fall into. We will spend time thinking about how we get stuck and may feel like there isn't a way out. When we are trapped, it prevents us from deepening our relationship with God and others. Through scripture, reflection, and community, we will explore how God meets us in these stuck places and offers us a way forward. By naming the traps that hold us back - whether pride, busyness, perfectionism, or doubt, we open ourselves to grace. Journals will be available starting March 2 outside the worship spaces and around the building.

ASH WEDNESDAY: MARCH 5

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 fpcf.w.org/livestream.

THE LENTEN JOURNEY: MARCH 5

A self-paced opportunity for prayer, the Lenten Journey provides seven meditation stations, each focusing on one of the seven last words of Jesus and an eighth meditation station reflecting on the meaning of resurrection in our own lives. The full experience follows the metaphor of journeying as participants move from one meditation center to the next and may choose to walk our indoor labyrinth. Sacred space, silence, sensory experiences, new forms of personal prayer, and journaling all enhance our ability to receive what Christ offers.

Whether you can spare only a few minutes, or can stay for hours, come, walk with Christ in his passion, through his suffering, and into the resurrection.

On March 5, the Great Hall will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Facilitators will be available from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1-3 p.m. to answer questions and assist you in your experience.

MIDDAY PRAYER SERVICES: WEDNESDAYS, MARCH 12 THROUGH APRIL 9 AT 12 P.M.

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

AFTERNOON CONCERTS: WEDNESDAYS, MARCH 12 THROUGH APRIL 9 AT 12 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:

- March 12: Peggy Graff, Fort Worth, Texas
- March 19: Rebecca Sawyer, Fort Worth, Texas
- March 26: Dalaie Choi, Wilmington, Delaware
- April 2: Joshua Boyd, Dallas, Texas
- April 9: Ahreum Congdon, Fort Worth, Texas

If you have questions about Lenten Worship services and other studies and gatherings, please contact the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski in the church office (michaelw@fpcf.w.org or 817.335.1231). May we have a holy Lent as we journey toward Holy Week and Easter.

Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,
Did you know that our church family is offering academic scholarships for the upcoming school year and

beyond? This is all made possible through the inspiring faithfulness and extravagant generosity of those who have gone before us. Thanks to the faithful stewardship of our community of faith, this new scholarship fund will bless students year after year as they pursue their education.

Hopefully you have heard about this, but just in case you haven't -- scholarships are available to high school seniors graduating this year as well as students currently enrolled in college, graduate school, vocational programs, or other educational pursuits. Eligible applicants include high school seniors active in First Pres Youth, participants at Community Crossroads, active church members enrolled in higher education, and children of First Pres staff members.

This scholarship is an ongoing opportunity to support students as they grow academically and prepare for their future. Whether pursuing a degree, learning a trade, or continuing education, all students needing financial support are

encouraged to apply.

Applications for the 2025-2026 academic year are open, with a submission deadline of March 15, 2025. To apply, scan the QR code here or call the church office. Also, please help spread the word to those you know who might be interested in applying, and reach out to the Administrative Office if you want to help support this great initiative! If you have any questions, please contact Marisa Pinon - our amazing Director of Finance & Accounting.



We are exceedingly grateful for the inspirational generosity that sustains this scholarship opportunity, and we look forward to investing in future generations of First Pres scholars for years to come! Furthermore, it is clear to me that this scholarship opportunity is just one more example of the many ways our young people are learning more and more what it means that we are all woven together in God's love, a beautiful tapestry of discipleship and community. Thanks be to God!

Keep on keepin' on,

Rev. Dr. Josh Stewart
Associate Pastor - Youth

Submissions

Submissions for the next issue of the Penn Street Letter are due Wednesday, March 19. 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.org or submit them online using the QR code here.



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Do you follow First Pres on social media? Find us on the following sites and follow along for photos, reminders, encouragement, and more!



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@firstpres_fw



@fpcf

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First Presbyterian Church's Session

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
Janie Lesok
Jane Mathis
Andrew Michalove
J.B. Smithson
Jay Stepp
Brian Wharry

2027 CLASS OF ELDERS

Mark Beasley
Leah Boom
Cesar Chavez
Judith Kinser
Ashli Smick
Judy Stricklin
Burch Waldron

Chancel Choir Special Anthem: March 2

On Sunday, March 2, the Chancel Choir will sing movement one of Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* at the 11 a.m. service. Sung in Hebrew and accompanied by organ, harp, and several percussion instruments, the piece begins with an attention-grabbing setting of Psalm 108.2 "Awake, harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn." Following the opening measures, Psalm 100's text of praise is exciting in its captivating rhythms and harmonies. As the movement nears the end, an organ, harp, and percussion interlude ushers in a quartet of singers before the final words of praise by the full choir.

Come experience this inspiring work!

February Session Highlights

First Presbyterian Church's Session met on Sunday, February 16. Highlights from that meeting included the following items:

- Salt & Light Dental Clinic update and goals for future.
- Ministry Motivation Report from Robyn on Mission statistics and campus alignment.
- 4th quarter Investments Report
- Approved Property Committee request, with Trustee recommendation to utilize the General Fund for several projects and improvements on both campuses.



Each month we'll highlight First Pres staff team updates, including new hires, anniversaries, and more.

MARCH SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

We celebrate the following members of our team on their years of faithful service with First Pres:

March 14: Becky Quick, Ministry Assistant, 3 years

March 21: Marisa Pinon, Director, Finance & Accounting, 9 years

March 22: Pandora Gonzales, Assistant Teacher (2s), 2 years

March 25: Savannah Roberts, Assistant Teacher (infants), 1 year



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

SUNDAYS IN MARCH

- 8 a.m. Worship in the Chapel
- 9 a.m. Worship in the Great Hall
- 10 a.m. Church School for all ages
- 11 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary & Livestream
- 3 p.m. Middle School Bells
- 3:30 p.m. Youth 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. High School Youth Group

MONDAYS IN MARCH

- 6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study
- 9 a.m. Formula & Diaper Ministry at Community Crossroads
- 9 a.m. Hot Breakfast & Choice Pantry at Community Crossroads
- 10 a.m. Wellness: Tai Chi
- 11:30 a.m. Clothing & Sack Lunch Distribution at Community Crossroads

WEDNESDAYS IN MARCH

- 10:45 a.m. Bible In-Depth
- 11:30 a.m. Food & Clothing Ministry at Community Crossroads
- 11:30 a.m. Sack Lunch Distribution at Community Crossroads
- 12 p.m. Lent Midday Prayer (begins March 12)
- 12:30 p.m. Lent Afternoon Organ Concert (begins March 12)
- 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

THURSDAYS IN MARCH

- 11:30 a.m. Food & Clothing Ministry at Community Crossroads
- 11:30 a.m. Sack Lunch Distribution at Community Crossroads

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

- 9 a.m. The Lenten Journey in Great Hall (until 5 p.m.)
- 12 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship in the Chapel
- 5:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship at WOW!
- 7 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship in the Sanctuary & Livestream

SATURDAY, MARCH 15-WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

- All Day Covenant Partnership Trip to Unión de Reyes, Cuba

MONDAY, MARCH 17

- 12 p.m. Lunch & Learn: This Child Here Ukraine Ministry

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

- 2:30 p.m. Coffee & Conversation: This Child Here Ukraine Ministry

Be Inspired

New Sunday Bible in Depth Class begins March 2

The Rev. Dr. Ann Hoch will be teaching the book of Micah during the spring quarter of the Sunday Bible in Depth Class which meets in Room 237 from 10-10:45 a.m. Join Dr. Hoch for this inspiring study of scripture! If you have questions about Bible in Depth or other Adult Church School opportunities, please contact the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschewski in the church office (michaelw@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 229).

Help Support Sunday Worship as a Slide Operator

Do you want to support our worship services from behind the scenes? We're looking for volunteer slide operators to help run the slideshow during our 9 a.m. worship in the Great Hall. No experience is necessary, and training is provided. Why Join?

- **Make a Difference:** Enhance the worship experience for everyone.
- **Flexible Commitment:** Just one Sunday a month, with flexibility to fit your schedule.
- **Easy to Learn:** No prior experience needed.
- **Ready to help?** Contact Deneice Allen (dallen@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231).

Blessed are the Peacemakers... Lenten Covenant Groups

Spiritual Formation will offer three covenant groups this Lenten season, all based on Megan McKenna's book, *A Perfect Bowl of Light: Stories of Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Repairing the World*. McKenna is a theologian, storyteller, speaker, and writer who counsels communities facing conflict and struggles for justice. We are called to be God's peacemakers and the first step in changing the world is reconciling our own relationships, beginning with the one with ourselves.

Groups are offered in Room 102 on Wednesdays, March 5 through April 9 at 11 a.m., Thursdays, March 6 through April 10 at 10:30 a.m., and Thursdays, March 13 through April 17 at 5:30 p.m. Register for the groups at fpcfw.org/spiritualformation.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT WORTH

Adult Education

Spring Adult Church School March 2 through May 25

Adult Church School classes meet each Sunday from 10-10:45 a.m. to study and support adults in nurturing their faith and discipleship. For more information visit fpcfw.org/adulted.

ALPHA AND OMEGA (70'S +): Room 310

Bible Study: Isaiah led by The Rev. Dr. Mark Sinnett

BIBLE IN DEPTH: Room 237

Bible Study: Micah led by The Rev. Dr. Ann Hoch

JOURNEYS

C.S. Lewis Book Study: The Great Divorce (3/2-3/9)

led by Rev. Murray Richey & Jimmy DeFoor

Lent Traps (3/16-4/20) led by Rev. Ashley Drake Mertz/
Eric Varnon in Room 226

Faith Conversations (4/27-5/25) Class-led in Room 234

GROWING FAMILIES OF FAITH: Room 236

Faith Conversations led by Herd Midkiff

MARANATHA: Room 239

Bible Study: Acts led by Dr. Steve Brotherton

CREATING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Room 104

Prayer Shawl Ministry led by Matt McGraw

PRESBYTERIAN ALL FAMILIES: Room 238

Lent Traps (through 4/0) led by Rev. Ashley Drake Mertz
and Eric Varnon. *Faith Conversations* (4/27-5/25)

SYS: Stripling Conference Room

Engaging Faith Book Study coordinated by Bill Goodwin

YOUNG ADULTS

Lent Traps (through 4/2) led by Rev. Ashley Drake Mertz
and Eric Varnon in Room 238

Faith Conversations (4/27-5/25) led by Mark Russell in
Room 234

YOUNG FAMILIES

Lent Traps (through 4/20) led by Rev. Ashley Drake Mertz
and Eric Varnon in Room 238

Faith Conversations (4/27-5/25) led by Cesar Chavez and
John Stevenson in Room 230

FIRST CONNECTIONS

This class is an opportunity for new members and guests to learn about First Pres and opportunities for discipleship and engagement. All are welcome! Register using the QR code here.



· Sunday, March 23: *Life at First Pres*

· Sunday, March 30: *Meeting the Pastoral Staff*

· Sunday, April 6: *Visit and learn about Community Crossroads*

· Sunday, April 13: *Penn St. campus tour*

Engage the World



On Saturday, February 15, Circles of Christ embarked on an enlightening field trip to the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, delving into powerful stories from the past. Learn more about Circles of Christ at fpcf.org/circlesofchrist.



In January 2025, Community Crossroads:

- Provided **1,346** households with groceries
- Provided **312** individuals with clothing
- Served **626** sack lunches
- Provided pet food to **275** pet owners
- Provided **155** hygiene items to individuals
- Provided **156** cleaning products to individuals
- Provided **391** packages of diapers and **100** cans of formula to parents
- Served **19** dental patients
- A dedicated team of **269** volunteers contributed a remarkable total of **1,419** hours of service!



Mission Partner Conversations with Ukrainian ministry: March 17 and 18

Join Robert Gamble and Olya Balaban from This Child Here (thischildhere.org/) for either a

- **Lunch and Learn: Monday, March 17 at 12 noon in Room 226**
- **Coffee and Conversation: Tuesday, March 18 at 2:30 in the Parlor**

This Child Here has been a First Pres ministry partner for many years, and we welcome Rev. Gamble and Olya Balaban (pictured together below) to give an update on the current challenges and hopes of this ministry in light of the war.



Interested? Register to attend using the QR code here.



First Pres Staff Enrichment

On Monday, February 17, the First Pres team turned Monday into FUNday with an afternoon of epic staff enrichment at Andretti Indoor Karting & Games. From racing to arcade games to laughter, everyone had a blast and created unforgettable memories!



Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of February 19. 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 Liana May on February 14, 2025 to Enrique and Susana Leon. Susana is a member of the First Pres Business Office.

The birth of Creighton Mark Eidson on January 12, 2025 to **Weston and Katie Eidson**. Creighton joins siblings Charles, Caroline, Henry, and William.

Our loving sympathy to...

The family and friends of Janet White following her death on February 11. Surviving First Pres family members include her brother and sister-in-law, **Mark and Wendi Gleason**.

The family and friends of Mary Lloyd following her death on February 16. Surviving First Pres staff member includes her grandson, Blake Hargrave.

The family and friends of Robert Mackay following his death on February 9. Surviving First Pres family members include his sister **Jane Mackay**.

The family and friends of **Isabelle Newberry** following her death on January 23. Surviving First Pres family members include Isabelle's daughter **Ruth Gessinger**.

The family and friends of David Sloan following his death on January 18. Surviving family members include his son James Sloan, and his son-in-law, **Murray Hilyard**.

The family and friends of **Marthanne Atcheson** following her death on January 11, 2025.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Pam and Marty McGuffin, Gail Stewart, Wil'Lwin Chochola, Steve Brotherton, Nancy Lynn Scott, Kay

Love, Gaylon Peyton, Ann Biggs, Pat Graham, Martha Brooks, Jo Ann Johnson, Elizabeth McCartney, 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.

Manning Day, Grace Comacho, Dick Coffey, Robert and Dinah Riddle, Tad Delgado and parents **Emily and Bryan Delgado, John Patterson, Larry Kinard, Amanda Deitz, Levi Deitz, June Sprott, Fred Wilson, Frances Blake, Phyllis Propes, 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...

Jim Meador (father of **Martha Letbetter**), Everett King (brother of **Barbara Holmes**), Ron Feagins (father-in-law of Blake Hargrave), Dave Broz (uncle of Ashley Drake Mertz), Rebecca Montoya (mother of **Cheryl Mireles**), Lonnie Goolsby (father of **Kelle Tillman**), Lucy Redrow (daughter of **Leigh Ann and Grant Redrow**), Katie Loudon (sister-in-law of **Jaci Travis**), Anja Dangelimer (family friend of **Lauren Black**), Claudia Masser (daughter-in-law of **Carol Toombs**), 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**), 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 Dominican Republic, Jed and Jenny Koball in Peru, Cathy Chang and Juan Lopez in the Philippines. We pray for our partner congregations: Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist in Fort Worth and for the congregations of Buen Pastor, Resurrección, and Cidra Presbyterian Churches in Cuba.

Welcome, New Members!

*Please join the Evangelism Work Group
in welcoming these new members.*



Liz Lustenberger and Keith Larson joined First Pres by transfer of membership on Sunday, January 26. Liz and Keith are PC(USA) elders. They are both engineers with extensive automotive industry backgrounds. They have two adult sons.



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Fort Worth, TX 76102

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT WORTH
Early Education Center

You're invited!
Early Education Center Sunday
at First Pres
Sunday: March 2 at 11 a.m.

- *Student art on display*
- *Special music in worship from our 3s & 4s*
- *Free All Church lunch*
- *Blessing of new playground at 1 p.m.*
- *Everyone is invited to come celebrate and learn more about First Pres' Early Education Center!*



SUMMER
camp & more!

Registrations open March 1 at
fpcfw.org/kidsummer