

THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

APRIL 2025 / VOLUME 25, NUMBER 4

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER *at* First Pres

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 13

- 8 a.m. in the Chapel
- 9 a.m. in the Great Hall
- 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary or livestream at fpcfw.org/livestream

On Palm Sunday we mark Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and journey through his last week on earth as we experience the passion narrative through scripture and song as the sermon.

HOLY WEEK MONDAY-WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14-16

- 12 p.m. Midday Prayer Services in the Chapel

These 30-minute services in the Chapel offer reflection on the last days of Jesus' ministry with prayer, music, and message.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 17

- 12 p.m. Worship in the Chapel
- 5:30 p.m. Intergenerational Service and Dinner in the Great Hall
- 7 p.m. Worship in the Sanctuary or livestream at fpcfw.org/livestream

Three worship services remembering the Last Supper Jesus shared with his disciples. The 5:30 p.m. service is an interactive, intentionally intergenerational, child appropriate Holy Week experience with our partner congregation, Mount Moriah. Scripture, songs, communion, and optional foot washing. Family-style dinner included.

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 18

- 12 p.m. Worship in the Chapel
- 7 p.m. Tenebrae Service in the Sanctuary or livestream at fpcfw.org/livestream

Good Friday observes the day of Jesus' suffering and crucifixion on the cross. The 7 p.m. Tenebrae service includes scripture and music, ending in darkness and silence.

EASTER EGG HUNT & BREAKFAST, SATURDAY, APRIL 19

- 9-10 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt & Breakfast

Families and kids of all ages are invited to a special breakfast. Egg hunt will follow. Register at fpcfw.org/easter.

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 20

- 7 a.m. Sunrise Service in the Memorial Garden

Celebrate Easter with the sunrise at this joyful service outdoors in the setting of First Presbyterian's Memorial Garden and Labyrinth. Chairs provided; inclement weather location is the Youth Center.

- 8:30-11 a.m. Easter Breakfast Buffet

Enjoy a free come-and-go continental breakfast buffet on the 3rd floor concourse (outside the Great Hall). Visit with your church family and celebrate the joy of Easter.

- 8 a.m. Worship in the Chapel
- 9 a.m. Worship in the Great Hall
- 11 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary or livestream at fpcfw.org/livestream

Joyfully celebrate Easter at our regular worship service times as we proclaim "He is risen! He is risen indeed!"



Help decorate the Easter Flowering Cross

Continuing the annual tradition this Easter, the Liturgical Arts subcommittee will have a flowering cross in front of the church for all who come to worship.

Weather permitting, the cross will be in front of the entrance to the Sanctuary, visible and available to those entering worship. We will celebrate the transition from Good Friday to Easter by filling in the cross with flowers you bring (from your yard or from a store or florist). All types and colors of flowers are welcome! Greenery will be provided by the church. The cross will grow with flowers throughout the morning, reflecting the joy of Easter.

In case of inclement weather, the cross will be on the third floor concourse outside the Great Hall.

Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,
Here at First Pres,
we have been
on this Lenten
journey for about
a month now.
Lent is a season
of reflection and

repentance. It is a season of self-examination and acknowledgement. It is a season of intentionality and openness. It is not a season we approach as a period of rigid obligation, but as an invitation to honestly examine our lives in the light of God's love and justice.

So, together we have approached all this in this season of Lent through the lens of "lent traps." What are the traps that we fall into on this road of discipleship? In what ways do we entrap ourselves on this journey towards Holy Week?

We have discussed things like intellectualism, busyness, and apathy. Michael talked about the trap of elitism while Robyn talked about pride. Josh shared about the dangers of being trapped by doubt rather than allowing doubt to help further our faith and Ashley talked about the bitter trap of sitting in our own resentment.

We chose this theme to help us think through our Lenten journey a little differently this year and our prayer

is that it did help you engage it with a little more intentionality on your part and with a little more openness to the Spirit moving in and through your life. But one more thing we are doing differently this year is *how* we are choosing to begin Holy Week.

Palm Sunday is the day in which we celebrate Jesus' procession into Jerusalem. But soon those shouts of "hosanna" turn to cries of "crucify." For this reason, Palm Sunday is also marked as Passion Sunday on our liturgical calendar, and we have decided to do an interactive passion reading on that day following the Gospel of Luke. This way we can try to avoid the trap of skipping from the palm branch procession to the empty tomb.

A lot happened during that original Holy Week and a lot is happening here at First Pres during this upcoming Holy Week as well. Look to the full schedule of events for more information, but I hope you will continue to journey with us in this season. Avoid the traps. Be open. Stay intentional. And let's walk together through Holy Week into the season of Easter.

Grace and Peace,

Brian

Submissions

Submissions for the next issue of the Penn Street Letter are due Wednesday, April 23. 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@fpcfw.org or submit them online using the QR code here.



Follow Us

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



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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

Get Your Personalized First Pres Name Tag Today!



We're excited to offer permanent name tags featuring the First Pres logo, available for purchase now! Choose between a convenient plastic pin-type or a sleek magnetic back. Ordering is easy—just visit our vendor's website by scanning the QR code here.

Remember, the Evangelism Work Group will continue to provide adhesive name tag stickers on Name Tag Sunday, the third Sunday of each month. Plus, if you serve as an usher or greeter, you'll receive a permanent name tag at no charge. Don't miss out on this opportunity to proudly wear your name and connect with our church community!



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

APRIL SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

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

April 3: Keydy Kawas, Lead Teacher (Infants), 2 years

April 12: Brian Coulter, Pastor/Head of Staff, 4 years

April 13: Chris Nicholson, Assistant Teacher (4s), 2 years

April 15: Becca Sawyer, Music Associate, 10 years

April 16: David Gallegos, Maintenance Technician, 4 years

April 18: Wes Hogue, Accountant, 8 years

April 21: Tesha Shreves, Nursery Caregiver, 1 year

April 25: MeLin Bartlett, Lead Teacher (3s), 9 years



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

SUNDAYS IN APRIL

- 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 APRIL

- 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 APRIL

- 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
- 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 APRIL

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

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2 & APRIL 9

- 12 p.m. Lent Midday Prayer
- 12:30 p.m. Lent Organ Concert & Lunch

SATURDAY, APRIL 12

- 8 a.m. Victory Over Violence Walk/Run
- 9 a.m. Circles of Christ Circle Up for Coffee

MONDAY, APRIL 21

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

THURSDAY, APRIL 24

- 5:30 p.m. Thursday Around the Table Potluck

SUNDAY, APRIL 27

- 8, 9, 11 a.m. Youth Sunday
- 5 p.m. Youth Ping Pong Tournament & Dinner

Be Inspired

Help fill goodie bags for the Presbyterian Night Shelter

Presbyterian Women and the Men's Ministry are creating goodie bags for the Presbyterian Night Shelter! We are asking the men of the church to contribute by donating protein bars or small 8 oz. water bottles to the church by April 24. Our goal is to collect 500 of each item. Items may be dropped off on Sundays at the welcome desk, or in Miguel Carlin's office during the week. We'll meet on Tuesday, April 29 at 5:30 p.m. in the First Pres gym to assemble and fill the bags. Afterward, we'll enjoy pizza and salad together. We look forward to coming together with friends to make a difference for those in need! Scan the QR code to register for the packing party by April 24.



Join Team First Pres for the annual Victory Over Violence Race, April 12



The 28th Annual Victory Over Violence Walk/Run takes place Saturday April 12, 2025. The race is an all-ages annual fundraising event benefitting many of The Women's Center's anti-violence initiatives, consisting of a 5K walk/run and 1K fun run through Trinity Park near downtown Fort Worth.

Learn more and register at pfcfw.org/wellness.



Wellness Together invites you to

THURSDAY AROUND THE TABLE

Enjoy delicious food and connect with fellow members of the First Pres community.

When: Thursday, April 24 at 5:30 p.m.
Where: First Pres Atrium
Why: To enjoy great food, meet new people, and fellowship with fellow First Pres members.
What: It's a potluck! Please bring your favorite main dish, and feel free to add an optional side, salad, or dessert. Drinks will be provided.

Questions? Contact Barbara Reece (817.863.3924)

Engage the World



In February, members of First Pres made a quick trip to Injerto, Honduras, to prepare for the installation of solar lights in 15 additional homes, in collaboration with Solar Under the Sun. This initiative will bring sustainable energy and brighter futures to the community, improving the quality of life for many families.



In February 2025, Community Crossroads:

- Provided **1,361** households with groceries
- Provided **302** individuals with clothing
- Served **625** sack lunches
- Provided pet food to **323** pet owners
- Provided **181** hygiene items to individuals
- Provided **178** cleaning products to individuals
- Provided **594** packages of diapers and **161** cans of formula to parents
- Served **12** dental patients
- A dedicated team of **193** volunteers contributed a remarkable total of **1,623** hours of service!



Spotlight on Ministry: Clothed in Love

At Community Crossroads, the Clothed in Love Ministry provides clothing, shoes, coats, and blankets to those in need. Clothed in Love is open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. until capacity is reached (about 25-30 neighbors each day). They are also open during WOW, the first Wednesday of each month, from 6-7 p.m.

This vital ministry is led by Lynda and Murray Richey and typically requires 8-10 volunteers to assist with sorting, tagging and distributing items, as well as a computer volunteer to manage records. Volunteers are needed from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

If you'd like to get involved and serve, please contact Malinda Morehead (mmorehead@fpcfw.org) for more information. Your time and care will make a lasting impact on our community.

Join us in sharing Christ's love through this hands-on ministry!



Recently around First Pres

From a Session Retreat to a Wellness walk/run and Early Education Center Sunday, 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@fpcfw.org.



Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of March 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 Lily Dulaney Pilgrim on March 5 to **Abbie** and Ben Pilgrim. She joins big brother, Townes, and grandparents, **Tina and Bart Phillips**.

Our loving sympathy to...

The family and friends of **Eve Chochola** following her death on March 19. Surviving First Pres family members include her son and daughter-in-law, **Bob and Wil'Lwin Chochola**.

The family and friends of Ann Daniel following her death on March 17. Surviving First Pres family members include her son and daughter-in-law, **Raymond and Kathi Daniel**.

The family and friends of Sam Bender following his death on March 13. Surviving First Pres family members include his daughter and son-in-law, **Jacqueline Bender and Ken Garlington**, grandchildren, **Rachel and Grant Garlington**.

The family and friends of Gary Burgess following his death on March 8. Surviving First Pres family members include his grandson and granddaughter-in-law, **Micah and Corissa Burgess**.

The family and friends of Carmen Mondragon following her death on March 8. Surviving First Pres family members include her daughter and son-in-law, **Lisa and Mark Connolly**, granddaughters **Rachel and Megan Connolly**, and niece, **Mary Salazar**.

The family and friends of Van Tilley following his death on March 1. Surviving First Pres family members include his son and daughter-in-law, **Jaret and Katie Tilley** and grandsons, **Eric and Rolf Tilley**.

The family and friends of Jim Meador following his death on February 25. Surviving First Pres family members include his daughter and son-in-law, **Martha and Vic Letbetter**, and

granddaughter, **Elizabeth Letbetter**.

The family and friends of Mary Ann D. Gibbs following her death on February 20. Surviving First Pres family members include her son and daughter-in-law, **Charlie and Maren Gibbs**, and granddaughters, **Alex, Nola, and Annika Gibbs**.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Janelle Eklund, Paul Allen, Heather Martin, Marion Lester, Betsy Pepper, Pam and Marty McGuffin, Gail Stewart, Wil'Lwin Chochola, Steve Brotherton, Nancy Lynn Scott, 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.

Judy Stricklin, Merilys Corning, Roxy Sherwood, Rachele Williams, 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...

Alex Allen (daughter of **Fred Oberkircher**), Martha Meador (mother of **Martha Letbetter**), Everett King (brother of **Barbara Holmes**), Ron Feagins (father-in-law of Blake Hargrave), Robert Mackay (brother of **Jane Mackay**), Dave Broz (uncle of Ashley Drake Mertz), 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**), 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**), 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.

Byron Keil joined First Pres on Sunday, March 2 by transfer from Ridgela Presbyterian Church. (Photo not available.)



Butch Miller joined First Pres by reaffirmation of faith on Sunday, March 2. Butch is member Margaret Miller's husband and a long-time visitor to First Pres.



Joan and John Wright joined First Pres on Sunday, March 2, by transfer of membership from Wesley United Methodist Church in Greenville, TX. They are the parents of soloist Anne Wright.

First Presbyterian Church

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PERIODICALS POSTMASTER:

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WWW.FPCFW.ORG



THE *joy* OF MO

August 29-September 1

Enjoy memorable moments with our church family at our annual weekend retreat at Mo-Ranch, a beautiful Presbyterian camp located in the Texas hill country.



LEARN MORE AT FPCFW.ORG/MORANCH AND REGISTER BY MAY 21