

# THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

MAY 2025 / VOLUME 25, NUMBER 5



## THE *joy* OF MO

### August 29-September 1

Make plans now for the annual All Church Labor Day Weekend Retreat at Mo-Ranch, August 29 through September 1. This year's theme is "The Joy of Mo" and you'll enjoy memorable moments with your church family and friends at Mo-Ranch, a beautiful Presbyterian camp located in the Texas Hill Country. We will focus on embracing the present moment and experiencing the joy of connection with others and God.

#### Lodging

- Wynne/Flato lodging per night: \$120
- Pheasant Run lodging per night: \$110
- Nicklos Barn Group Housing with kitchen facilities per night: \$140

#### Meals:

- 0-3: Free
- 4-11: \$50 for 7 meals (breakfast Saturday, Sunday, Monday; lunch and dinner Saturday and Sunday)
- 12 and older: \$85 for 7 meals (breakfast Saturday, Sunday, Monday; lunch and dinner Saturday and Sunday)

#### Activities

- Worship together at Chapel on the Hill Sunday morning
- Land: waterfront, hiking, labyrinth, playgrounds, star gazing, bird watching, gaga pits, courts for volleyball, tennis, basketball, etc.,
- Water: swimming pool (adult and child pools), waterfront, Mo-Slide, canoes, rapids on the Guadalupe River
- Extra optional (additional costs) activities: high ropes course

**LEARN MORE AT [FPCFW.ORG/MORANCH](https://www.fpcfw.org/moranch) AND REGISTER BY MAY 21**

# Pastor's Letter



One of the great things about being part of a church is the care that members offer to one another through various ministries. By offering care directly to one

another through meals, prayer shawls, or visitation, we share the love of Christ, building up one another as Paul implores in 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

If you have been on the receiving end of a vase of flowers, or a home visit when you have been in a season of need, you know how meaningful it can be to receive a thoughtful gesture from your church family. A reminder that you are in fact part of the body of Christ, and that you are not alone even in times of loneliness.

If you have been on the receiving end of a celebratory note or muffins you know the meaning of being acknowledged for your skills and gifts.

It is my joy to support the work of the Congregational Care Committee and the various teams who work within the committee.

These ministries happen because of dedicated and caring members who are committed to being the hands and feet of Christ to fellow First Pres members. If you have been searching for a way to plug in at First Pres you are invited to join any of these teams. Many of them meet one time per month.

Additionally, we welcome information about ways we can be supporting you. If you are undergoing surgeries or treatments, having life changes (including joyful changes!), we want to know so we can support and celebrate you. Please reach out with updates.

The Congregational Care Committee looks forward to welcoming you to one of the teams and continuing to offer care as we live out Jesus' command to love one another as he has loved us. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your life!

Teams within the Congregational Care Committee:

- Stephen Ministry & Sustaining Care
- Care Teams
- Confidential Prayer Line
- Shuttle Service
- Men's Visitation
- PW Fellowship Visitation
- Card Ministry
- Flower Ministry
- Muffin Ministry
- Prayer Shawl Ministry

Descriptions of each Team can be found at [fpcfw.org/careandsupport](http://fpcfw.org/careandsupport).

You are invited to reach out to me, or the Congregational Care Committee Co-Chairs Audrey Black and Judy Stricklin for more information about how to engage with the various teams.

## Submissions

Submissions for the next issue of the Penn Street Letter are due Wednesday, May 21. 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](mailto: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!



@firstpresfw



@firstpres\_fw



@fpcfw

## Publisher Info

The Penn Street Letter is published monthly by First Presbyterian Church, 1000 Penn Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-3496. Periodicals postage is paid at Fort Worth, TX and at additional offices.

Editor: Pam Burkholder

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Penn Street Letter at 1000 Penn Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-3496.

## 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

# April Session Highlights

First Presbyterian Church's Session met on Sunday, April 13. Highlights from that meeting included the following items:

- Examination and receiving into Membership the 2025 Confirmation Class
- Approved list of First Pres Scholarship Recipients for 2025-2026 academic year
- Vision Squad Trifold updates



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

## WELCOME, NEW HIRES!

Let's give a heartfelt welcome to the newest members of the First Pres team!

**Lesly Martinez**, Afternoon Assistant Teacher (2s)

**Hannah Huber**, Summer Lead Teacher (K-2)

**Dr. Carolyn Trieu**, Dentist (Salt & Light Dental Clinic)

**Robert Montelongo**, Design & Media Specialist

## MAY SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

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

**Starla Adams-Jones**, Lead Teacher (Infants), 8 years

**Norbert Jankovich**, Chef de Cuisine, 6 years

**Jessica Mares**, Dental Coordinator, 1 year

**Matt McGraw**, Parish Visitor, 3 years

**Ashley Drake Mertz**, Parish Associate for Pastoral Care, 2 years



Below are some highlights of special events happening in May. For a complete calendar, visit [fpcfw.org](http://fpcfw.org).

### SUNDAYS IN MAY

- 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

### MONDAYS IN MAY

- 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 MAY

- 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 MAY

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

### FRIDAY, MAY 2

- 7 p.m. Penn Street Arts Cinema Organ Concert

### SATURDAY, MAY 3

- 2 p.m. Young Adults Social Gathering @ Andretti Racing

### SUNDAY, MAY 4

- 10 a.m. Youth Leader Appreciation Breakfast
- 11 a.m. Confirmation Sunday
- 11:30 a.m. All Church Picnic & Blood Drive
- 4 p.m. Youth End of Year Party
- 5 p.m. Scotland Trip Info Meeting
- 6:30 p.m. Contemplative Worship Service

### MONDAY, MAY 5

- 7 p.m. MOMS End of Year Celebration

### TUESDAY, MAY 6

- 5 p.m. Scotland Trip Info Meeting

### SUNDAY, MAY 18

- 9 a.m. Jazz Sunday
- 12:15 p.m. Young Adult Sunday Lunch
- 12:15 p.m. Children's Ministry End of Year Parties
- 6 p.m. Senior Dinner Celebration of Graduates

### MONDAY, MAY 26

Church offices, Early Education Center, and Community Crossroads Outreach Center closed for Memorial Day



# Be Inspired

## Penn Street Arts presents: Cinema Concert on Friday, May 2

We are thrilled to invite you to a unique Cinema Concert featuring award-winning organist Joshua Stafford on May 2, at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

This special concert, co-sponsored by the American Guild of Organists Fort Worth Chapter, promises to be an unforgettable experience. Joshua Stafford will showcase his incredible talent by improvising a live soundtrack to *Speedy*, a classic 1928 American comedy starring Harold Lloyd.

This concert is free and open to the public. Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy a night of exceptional music and timeless cinema!

## Faithful Action & Response Gathering: May 12

All are invited to the third gathering of FAR (Faithful Action and Response) on Monday, May 12 from 4:15-5:30 p.m. in the First Pres Youth Center to discuss Cody Sanders' lecture on "feral hope" that we will listen to together. We will have time for people to connect on the faithful action that they are involved in as we underscore our action in Christian hope. For more information, contact Robyn Michalove (robynm@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266).

*"If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together" (African Proverb)*

## Guns to Gardens: June 1

Come and learn about this national program affiliated with the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship ([presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence-prevention](http://presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence-prevention)) about how to turn unwanted guns into garden tools or art and find a positive way to reduce gun violence in our community. We'll gather on Sunday, June 1, from 4:30-6 p.m. in Room 235 at First Pres.

*"...they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2.4)*

## PW Summer Treat: June 5

PW Summer Treat is Thursday, June 5 at 6 p.m. and you're invited! We'll gather in the La Puertita Room of Joe T. Garcia's (2201 N Commerce St, Fort Worth 76164). Cost is \$30 and includes enchilada dinner and dessert. You may pay by cash or check for the dinner at the door, no credit cards. Drinks are cash only and not included in the dinner cost. Come dine with friends! Seating is limited, so register at [fpcfw.org/pw](http://fpcfw.org/pw) by May 31.

## Scotland Trip 2025 Information Meetings

Join Dr. Michael Waschevski at one of three informational meetings to learn more about the planned April 26-May 4, 2026 Scotland Trip! The meetings will be held on Wednesday, April 30 at 11 a.m., Sunday, May 4 at 5 p.m., and Tuesday, May 6 at 5 p.m. This trip will explore the Outer Hebrides and the Highlands, with the tour beginning and ending in Edinburgh. At the informational meetings the full itinerary, trip details, and deposit information



will be presented. This tour is the fourth tour arranged for First Pres by Scotus Tours director Rev. Jim Wallace. To register for an Informational Meeting, scan the QR code here or contact Deneice (dallen@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 261) in the church office.

## Senior Dinner Celebration: May 18

Graduation season is upon us! Here at First Pres we want to celebrate the high school graduates of 2025 in various ways! We will be hosting a senior celebration dinner on Sunday, May 18 at 6 p.m. in the Youth Center. Seniors will also be featured in upcoming First Pres digital and printed publications as well as a special display case in June. If



you and your senior would like to attend the dinner and/or be included in the publications, please scan the QR code here to register and upload pictures by May 9.

If you are a church member, and would like to bless the seniors that attend the celebration dinner with a gift basket, please email Becky (bquick@fpcfw.org) to be assigned a senior.

## Grace Presbytery Bus to Mo-Ranch Women's Conference

Hop on the bus to the Mo-Ranch Women's Conference, June 6-8! Register to attend the conference (scan the QR code here). And then, leave the driving to someone else. For just \$50 roundtrip, ride in comfort (restroom, wifi, stop for lunch) with women from Grace Presbytery. Friday morning departure from right here at First Pres. Ft. Worth. Sign up info soon. For now, let Rebecca Gafford know to save you a seat (rgafford@sbcglobal.net).





# Engage the World

## Update on our Mission Co-Workers and PC(USA) World Mission

The Interim Unified Agency (IUA), the joint agency created from the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, is embracing a new and evolving approach to PC(USA)'s global ministry. This transition moves from a model centered on "mission co-workers" to a structure where "global ecumenical liaisons" will facilitate relationships between our global partners and the congregations, networks, and mid councils of the PC(USA). This shift is part of an intentional effort to create a sustainable model for global ministry that prioritizes global partner leadership.

These changes impact 79 staff members, including all mission co-workers and the World Mission staff. First Pres has partnered directly with World Mission to support five mission co-workers since 2011: Cathy Chang and Juan Lopez in the Philippines; Cindy Corell in the Dominican Republic (formerly Haiti) and Jed and Jenny Koball in Peru.

Juan Lopez and Cathy Chang will relocate from the Philippines to the United States and will begin a new position with the IUA as a Global Ecumenical Liaison.

The Koballs will stay in Peru where Jenny will serve as an International Young Adult Volunteer Site Coordinator and Jed will serve as a Global Ecumenical Liaison.

Cindy Corell will relocate to the USA from the Dominican Republic and serve as a Global Ecumenical Liaison.

A Global Ecumenical Liaison "will assist global partners, diaspora communities in the United States, mid councils, congregations, mission networks, national or regional PC(USA) programs, and local organizations. They will facilitate and encourage connections, relationships, and shared work in ministry and mission." (World Mission leader addresses questions regarding shift in global ministry approach | Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.))

We are grateful for our years of partnership with our mission co-workers and their visits to our congregation. We give thanks to God for their faithful ministry and pray for their transition to the next ministries to which God calls them.



## Cuba Partnership Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary

2025 marks a significant milestone as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our partnerships with three sister Presbyterian-Reformed congregations in the Presbytery of Matanzas in western Cuba. A team of four people traveled on our seventh partner trip to the congregations in March. They renewed our covenant for another 3 years with representatives from the churches. Our partnership aims to affirm and build on the unity of the church through a mutual exchange of people, Christian education and Bible study, cultural understanding, and financial and in-kind support. We celebrate this milestone and continue to pray for our continued shared ministry across borders of land and language.



In March 2025, Community Crossroads:

- Provided **1,443** households with groceries
- Provided **293** individuals with clothing
- Served **783** sack lunches
- Provided pet food to **330** pet owners
- Provided **180** hygiene items to individuals
- Provided **162** cleaning products to individuals
- Provided **701** packages of diapers and **213** cans of formula to parents
- Served **32** dental patients
- A dedicated team of **177** volunteers contributed a remarkable total of **1,733** hours of service!





# Easter at First Pres

Christ is risen! Alleluia! Easter at First Pres was a joyous celebration with four worship services, a stunning flowering cross, and a delightful brunch!





# Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of April 22. 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 Jackson “Doak” Williams on December 16, 2024 to parents Cameron Kramer Williams and Jackson Williams. First Pres family members include grandparents **Margaret and Philip Kramer** and great grandmother **Nancy Dozier**.

The birth of John “Brooks” Ryan on March 25, 2025 to parents Kaitlyn and **Andrew Ryan**. First Pres family members include Brooks’ grandparents **John and Amy Ryan**, and aunt **Mimi Ryan**.

The birth of Anderson Richard Black on March 5, 2025 to parents Kelly and Steve Black. First Pres family members include grandparents **Phil and Pam Grossman**.

## *Our loving sympathy to...*

The family of Lorraine Kelley following her death on March 19. Surviving First Pres family members include her sister **Oleta Thrower**.

The family of Loyce Ruth Vick following her death on March 24. Surviving First Pres family members include her son **Greg Vick** and grandsons **Cole and Hunter Vick**.

Family and friends of Rick McDuff, First Pres Maintenance Technician, following his death on April 15, 2025.

## *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, Pat Richardson, Gail Davis, and Irene Howard**, who are recovering from surgery or injury. We also pray for their caregivers.

**Margo Dean, 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), 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 partner congregations: Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist in Fort Worth and for the congregations of Buen Pastor, Resurrección, and Cidra Presbyterian Churches in Cuba.



## Six-week Grief Support Group begins June 1

First Presbyterian Church is offering a six-week Grief Support Group on Sundays beginning Sunday, June 1 through Sunday, June 29, 1:30-3 p.m. in Room 102, led by Rachel Rigdon.

Rachel works as a chaplain at Cook Children’s Medical Center in Fort Worth. Rachel is an ordained United Methodist Deacon and Board Certified Chaplain. Rachel earned her M.Div. degree at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. She has several years of experience working with children and adults as Chaplain and pastoral caregiver in multi-faith settings. Rachel is passionate about grief support for all ages and believes in the importance and sacredness of our own stories.

This group offers a supportive and encouraging space in which to experience God’s presence, comfort, and strength. This group is free and open to members and friends of First Pres and the community.

Learn more and register at [fpcfw.org/careandsupport](http://fpcfw.org/careandsupport).





**First Presbyterian Church**

1000 Penn Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76102

**PERIODICALS POSTMASTER:**

Send address changes to  
The Penn Street Letter,  
1000 Penn Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76102

**Church Office**

Ph: 817.335.1231

**WWW.FPCFW.ORG**

THE  
Penn  
Street  
Letter

2ND ANNUAL FIRST PRES  
**PICKLEBALL  
TOURNAMENT**



**SUNDAY, JUNE 1  
FIRST PRES GYM  
11:30 BRUNCH  
12:30 TOURNAMENT**

*Need a pickleball refresher?  
There will be a class Wednesday,  
May 28 at 6 p.m. in the Gym.*

**SIGN UP AT [FPCFW.ORG/WEELLNESS](http://FPCFW.ORG/WEELLNESS)  
*SEE YOU ON THE COURT!***

ALL CHURCH  
**PICNIC**

**Sunday, May 4  
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Don't miss a morning of worship  
followed by a delicious lunch,  
bounce house, ice cream truck,  
Billy Buttons, balloon artist,  
face painting, and a blood drive!**