

THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

AUGUST 2025 / VOLUME 25, NUMBER 8

A New Season of Opportunities at First Pres!

Blessing of the Backpacks & Back to School Party: Sunday, August 17

Join us at 9 or 11 a.m. worship for the annual Blessing of the Backpacks! Students of all ages are invited to bring their backpacks, daycare bags, or laptop cases for a special blessing. That evening, we'll celebrate with a Back to School Party at Rollerland West for children and youth! Questions? Contact Becky (bquick@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 265).

Fall Kickoff at First Pres

Sunday, September 7 is Fall kickoff at First Pres! We're excited to launch the new season as our full lineup of programming for all ages resumes. For children and youth, that means the return of Sunday church school, music, and youth group activities! Keep an eye on your inbox and mailbox for more details coming soon!

Fall Church School Classes for Adults

Sundays beginning September 7, 10-10:45 a.m.

Beginning Sunday, September 7, nine adult Church School classes will meet to study and support adults in nurturing their faith and discipleship. Classes meet from 10-10:45 a.m. each week and are led by an outstanding faculty of members, staff, and friends of First Presbyterian Church. Bible study, faith formation, and contemporary issues in church and society form the curriculum. For more information, please contact the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschewski in the church office. (817.335.1231, ext. 229 or michaelw@fpcfw.org)

Celebrate Josh Stewart's 20th Anniversary as Associate Pastor



This August marks a remarkable milestone - Josh Stewart's 20th anniversary as Associate Pastor of Youth at First Pres! We're inviting all former youth, parents, and friends to help us celebrate his two decades of dedicated ministry.

We'd love for you to share your memories, stories, and photos that reflect the impact Josh has had on your life. Please send your notes and pictures to Becky Quick (bquick@fpcfw.org) by August 11.

To celebrate in person, join us for a special reception on Sunday, August 17 following 11 a.m. worship. Bring your cards and well-wishes, or write one at the event - we'll have plenty on hand.

We've reached out to as many former youth as possible, but we know we may have missed a few. If you know someone who would want to be part of this celebration - including parents or family - please pass this along.

Let's come together to show Josh how meaningful his ministry has been over these 20 years!



summer IN THE PSALMS

AUGUST READING PLAN

BOOK 4:

August 1: Psalm 96, 97, 98
August 2: Psalm 99, 100, 101
August 3: Psalm 102
August 4: Psalm 103
August 5: Psalm 104
August 6: Psalm 105
August 7: Psalm 106

BOOK 5:

August 8: Psalm 107
August 9: Psalm 108, 109
August 10: Psalm 110, 111, 112
August 11: Psalm 113, 114, 115
August 12: Psalm 116, 117
August 13: Psalm 118
August 14: Psalm 119.1-32
August 15: Psalm 119.33-64
August 16: Psalm 119.65-112
August 17: Psalm 119.113-136
August 18: Psalm 119.137-176
August 19: Psalm 120, 121, 122, 123
August 20: Psalm 124, 125, 126, 127
August 21: Psalm 128, 129, 130
August 22: Psalm 131, 132, 133
August 23: Psalm 134, 135
August 24: Psalm 136
August 25: Psalm 137, 138
August 26: Psalm 139
August 27: Psalm 140, 141
August 28: Psalm 142, 143
August 29: Psalm 144, 145
August 30: Psalm 146, 147
August 31: Psalm 148, 149, 150

Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,

As August settles in, the temperatures continue to rise here in Fort Worth. The scorching heat reminds us just how critical it is

to be a place of welcome, shelter, and compassion—especially for our neighbors without homes or access to cooling.

I am especially grateful for the ministry of Room in the Inn - an ecumenical ministry that brings churches across Fort Worth together to provide dignity, friendship, and safe overnight shelter to those experiencing homelessness during the hottest months of the year. Every Monday night during July and August, volunteers at First Pres have shared meals, laughter, cool air, and genuine community with our guests. It's a ministry that transforms both those who serve and those who are served—and it embodies the heart of our faith. I am thankful that we are marking our 15th year of hospitality with Room in the Inn and for the many volunteers (innkeepers, bus drivers, meal providers, laundry volunteers, bedmakers, hospitality team and more!) who are committed to this critical ministry in our community.

In addition to Room in the Inn, our Community Crossroads campus continues to be a vital hub of mercy and justice. Once again this summer we are an official Cooling

Station partnering with the City of Fort Worth, and this year we are one of only 2 in our city who offer air conditioning and respite from the heat for unhoused neighbors. And also, this space is more than just cool air—it is a sign of God's love made tangible.

In this season of heat and hardship, may we continue to be a church that brings shade and light, refuge and renewal. Thank you for being a people of mission, showing Christ's hospitality to our neighbors near and far. Stay cool, stay connected, and stay faithful.

With gratitude,

P.S. Please be sure to check out our Mission Monday videos, accessible on our social media, produced by our Communications team this summer. The 10 videos highlight five impactful ministries at Community Crossroads (clothing, dental clinic, food pantry, formula and diapers, and Worship on Wednesdays) and five incredible ministries with our local and global partners (Academy 4 mentoring program, Cuba partnerships, Mission on the Move camps, New Leaf permanent supportive housing, solar projects in Honduras). These stories have helped us celebrate the ways God is at work through your generosity, your prayers, and your hands and feet of service.

Submissions

Submissions for the next issue of the Penn Street Letter are due Wednesday, August 27. 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!



@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



people first at First Pres

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

AUGUST SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

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

Michelle Gutierrez, Assistant Teacher (2s), 1 year

Lynda Dinsdale, Parish Visitor, 2 years

Dakota Lester, Lead Teacher (2s), 2 years

Keyanna Smith, Assistant Teacher (3s), 2 years

Bee Morrell, Lead Teacher (4s), 2 years

Reena Krishnan, Assistant Teacher (4s), 7 years

Laura Collins, Music Associate, 10 years

Seferino Sanchez, Maintenance Technician, 10 years

Alyssa Martin, Director of the Early Education Center (EEC), 12 years

Chris Clingman, Assistant Teacher (Toddlers), 18 years

Leah Wyckoff, WOW Coordinator, 19 years

Josh Stewart, Associate Pastor, Youth, 20 years

Tonya Campbell, Lead Teacher (1s), 20 years

Cathy Farris, Lead Teacher (4s), 20 years

Celeste Falter, Business Office Manager, 25 years

Daniel Connor, Lead Teacher (3s), 29 years



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

SUNDAYS IN AUGUST

- 8 a.m. Worship in the Chapel
- 9 a.m. Worship in the Great Hall
- 10 a.m. Wonder, Love & Play Children & Youth Church School
- 10 a.m. Bible Study: The Psalms
- 10 a.m. Faith & Film: The Chosen season 2 (through Aug. 10)
- 11 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary & Livestream

MONDAYS IN AUGUST

- 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
- 3 p.m. Community Crossroads Summer Cooling Station
- 5 p.m. Room in the Inn

WEDNESDAYS IN AUGUST

- 11:30 a.m. Food & Clothing Ministry at Community Crossroads
- 11:30 a.m. Sack Lunch Distribution at Community Crossroads
- 3 p.m. Community Crossroads Summer Cooling Station
- 5:30 p.m. WOW! Worship and Dinner at Community Crossroads

THURSDAYS IN AUGUST

- 11:30 a.m. Food & Clothing Ministry at Community Crossroads
- 11:30 a.m. Sack Lunch Distribution at Community Crossroads
- 3 p.m. Community Crossroads Summer Cooling Station

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3

- 6:30 p.m. Contemplative Worship

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12

- 7 p.m. Young Adult Study & Discussion

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17

- 9 & 11 a.m. Blessing of the Backpacks during worship
- 5 p.m. Young Adult Sunday Together: Games & Snacks
- 5 p.m. Back to School Children & Youth Party

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24

- 10 a.m. Intergenerational Mission Project
- 10 a.m. TCU UKirk Connect and Learn

TUESDAY, AUGUST 26

- 7 p.m. Young Adult Study & Discussion

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27

- 6 p.m. Young Adult Pickleball

Want to join a fantastic team?
Know someone who does?
First Pres is hiring!



FPCFW.ORG/CAREERS

Be Inspired

New to First Pres? Been here a while? You're invited! First Connections begins September 14

The First Connections class is an opportunity for new members and guests to learn about First Pres and opportunities for discipleship and connection. Even if you have been at First Presbyterian for a while, you're invited to join for a refresher, and enjoy getting to know our new members and guests. Everyone is invited!

- **Sunday, September 14: Opportunities for Discipleship**
- **Sunday, September 21: Tour of Community Crossroads**
- **Sunday, September 28: Meet the Pastors**
- **Sunday, October 5: Walking Tour of Penn Street Campus**
- **Sunday, October 12: Stewardship at First Pres**



Remember, everyone is invited, and everyone is welcome! Register for one or more of the meetings with the QR code here. Questions? Call the church office (817.335.1231) or contact Chris Bartley (cbartley@fpcf.org).

TCU Ukirk Connect and Learn

Meet Rev. Sarah Crowther-Dixon, UKirk Campus Minister at TCU, on Sunday, August 24, from 10 to 10:45 a.m. in Fahrenkamp Lounge. Come learn more about this exciting new campus ministry and how it's engaging students in Fort Worth. All are welcome!

Presbyterian Women to Welcome Bible Study Author on August 26

All Presbyterian Women are invited to a special program in the Great Hall on Tuesday, August 26, featuring Rhashell D. Hunter, author of the 2025–2026 PW/Horizons Bible Study *Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ*. The program is free, and lunch will be available for \$10. Register at fpcf.org/pw by August 15.

Betsy's Book People resumes September 8

Love a good book and great conversation? First Presbyterian Church's book group, Betsy's Book People, meets on the second Monday of each month in the Parlor from 11 a.m. to 12 noon, September through May.

Upcoming reads:

- September: *The Guncle* by Steven Rowley
- October: *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks
- November: *The Women: A Novel* by Kristen Hannah

Whether you've read the book or not, you're always welcome! Each month, a group member leads a discussion, and we plan ahead so the church library can have a copy available. Most titles can also be found at the Fort Worth Public Library, on Libby, or through Amazon. It's always a lively, thoughtful, and fun hour together!

For questions or more information, contact Judy Nelson at 817.454.8870 or judytnelson@icloud.com.

Busy Women's Bible Study: Discover 1 & 2 Samuel

Discover the stories of Samuel, Saul, and David in a Bible study that blends spiritual insight with historical and geographical context. Whether you're new to Scripture or a seasoned reader, this study offers meaningful reflection on leadership, faith, and God's presence in our lives.

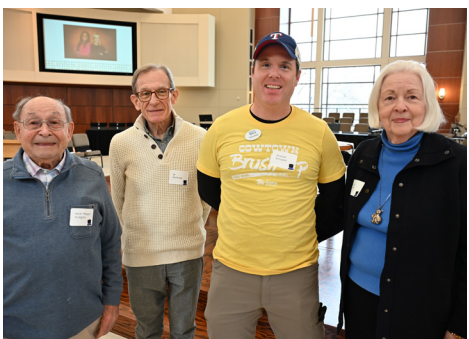
The group meets Mondays, September 8 – November 10, in Room 310 at First Pres. Prayer and fellowship begin at 11:20 a.m., followed by discussion at 11:30 a.m. Bring your lunch if you'd like. The study, led by Karen Steffler, uses a book available on Amazon.

For more information, contact Lisa Waldron at 817-239-3807 or lisawaldron58@gmail.com. Questions? Contact Lisa Waldron (817.239.3807 or lisawaldron58@gmail.com) for details or support.

Engage the World

Ministry Spotlight: First HAND Food Outreach

Hospitality · Advocacy · Nurture · Dignity



At Community Crossroads, our First Hands Ministry lives out Christ's call to feed and care for our neighbors through multiple food access points that honor choice, dignity, and relationship.

Each Monday and every third Thursday evening, our choice pantry allows neighbors to walk through and select their own groceries—an empowering experience that reinforces dignity and agency. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, we offer a walk-up and drive-thru grocery distribution, providing produce, meat, bread, and pantry staples to anyone in need. We also prepare non-perishable sack lunches for our unhoused neighbors, available Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

This is the largest ministry at Crossroads, serving over 500 individuals and families each week - and it takes a village! Volunteers arrive as early as 6:45 a.m. on Thursdays to unload delivery trucks, sort produce, bag groceries, prep sack lunches, and serve our neighbors with care and compassion. Each role is vital: from computer check-in to car loading, every task contributes to the heart of this ministry.

We would love to have you join us. There are many ways to get involved:

- **Mondays: 8 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**
- **Wednesdays: 8 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**
- **Thursdays: 6:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

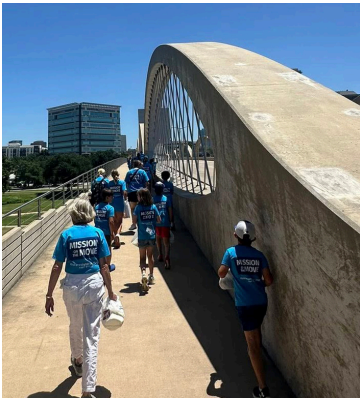
Whether you have an hour or a whole morning, your hands and heart can make a difference. If you're ready to serve or want to learn more, contact Malinda Morehead at mmorehead@fpcf.org.

Come be a part of sharing Christ's love in action - through food, friendship, and faithful service.



In June 2025, Community Crossroads:

- Provided **1,447** households with groceries
- Provided **318** individuals with clothing
- Served **793** sack lunches
- Provided pet food to **380** pet owners
- Provided **187** hygiene items to individuals
- Provided **178** cleaning products to individuals
- Provided **742** packages of diapers and **219** cans of formula to parents
- Served **39** dental patients
- A dedicated team of **204** volunteers contributed a remarkable total of **1,938** hours of service!



During the week of July 21, 40 kids, 10 grandfriends, plus several youth and adult sponsors, gathered for Mission on the Move—a powerful, hands-on experience of learning and service. Through visits to local ministries like Community Crossroads, and Taste Community Kitchen, participants explored what it means to live with compassion, serve, and grow in community. Whether riding the bus, preparing meals, or listening to stories, our intergenerational group is deepening their faith and empathy—together.



Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of July 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...

Our loving sympathy to...

The family and friends of **Gail Davis** following her death on July 8, 2025. Surviving First Pres family members include her husband, **Jack Davis**.

The family and friends of **Janelle Eklund** following her death on July 6, 2025. Surviving First Pres family members include her daughter and son-in-law, **Katie and Jaret Tilley**, and grandsons, **Eric and Rolf Tilley**.

The family and friends of Jane Landreth Russell following her death on June 13, 2025. Surviving First Pres family members include her sister and brother-in-law, **Lynda and Grady Shrophshire**.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Jackie Taylor, Phil Grossman, Carol Sue Hammett, Paul Allen, Heather Martin, Marion Lester, Betsy Pepper, Gail Stewart, Wil'lwin Chocola, Steve Brotherton, Nancy Lynn Scott, Gaylon Peyton, Ann Biggs, Pat Graham, Martha Brooks, Jo Ann Johnson, Elizabeth McCartney, Ronnie Sherwood, Pat Richardson, and Irene Howard who are recovering from surgery or injury. We also pray for their caregivers.

John Wright, Margo Dean, Judy Stricklin, Roxy Sherwood, Rachele Williams, Manning Day, Grace Camacho, Robert and Dinah Riddle, Tad Delgado and parents Emily and Bryan Delgado,

John Patterson, Larry Kinard, Amanda Deitz, Levi Deitz, 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...

Haley Twilligear (stepdaughter of Deneice Allen), David Gallegos (First Pres staff), Alex Allen (daughter of **Fred Oberkircher**), Martha Meador (mother of **Martha Letbetter**), 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**), Anja Dangelimer (family friend of **Lauren Black**), 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.

Welcome, New Members!

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



Elizabeth and Joe Cho joined First Pres on Sunday, July 20 by reaffirmation of faith. Elizabeth, Joe and daughter

Vivian (4), have been worshipping with us since 2024. Elizabeth is a professor with UNT Health Science Center, and Joe is a pharmacist with Medical City Healthcare.



Nancy Roche joined First Pres on Sunday, June 29 by reaffirmation of faith. Nancy has recently been worshipping with us and is retired from government contracting.



Amy and Michael Tackitt joined First Pres on Sunday, July 20 by transfer from First Christian Church of Brownfield,

Texas. Amy, Michael and sons Benjamin (16), Patrick (12) and Daniel (10) have been worshipping with us for a few months now. Amy is a high school teacher in Burleson ISD, and Michael is an administrator with JPS.



Elizabeth and Brad Winders joined First Pres on Sunday, July 20 by reaffirmation of faith. Elizabeth is a longtime member of the

First Pres Chancel Choir and works in admissions at UNT. Brad is a band director with Denton ISD. Their son Bobby is three years old.



First Presbyterian Church

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THE
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A vibrant graphic for a pool party. The background is a blue pool tile pattern. In the center, the words "POOL PARTY" are written in large, white, block letters. The "O"s in "POOL" are replaced by two inflatable rings: one is multi-colored (orange, red, yellow, green, blue) and the other is yellow with orange segments. To the left of the text is a green palm frond and a large green monstera leaf with a small yellow flower. To the right is a red and white striped beach umbrella. At the bottom, the text "AUG 8 | 7-9P.M. | FOREST PARK POOL" is written in large, white, block letters. Below this, a smaller line of text reads: "This event is free for the First Pres community, and all are invited! Make plans to beat the heat and enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship with your First Pres family!"

POOL PARTY

AUG 8 | 7-9P.M. | FOREST PARK POOL

This event is free for the First Pres community, and all are invited! Make plans to beat the heat and enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship with your First Pres family!