

THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

NOVEMBER 2025 / VOLUME 25, NUMBER 11



Help share Thanksgiving with our neighbors! Using the shopping list below (please follow requested sizes and keep items in original packaging), fill a bag and drop it off at the red carts near the worship spaces on Sundays, November 9 & 16, or at the church office (Mon–Fri, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.) from November 10–14. Each neighbor will receive a voucher to pick up a turkey or ham at a local grocery store - your donations provide the rest of the meal!



Prefer to give financially? Make checks to First Presbyterian Church with "Thanksgiving Baskets 2025" in the memo, or give online using the QR code here.

SHOPPING LIST:

- ❑ 15 oz. can yams
- ❑ 15 oz. can cranberry sauce
- ❑ 15 oz. can chicken broth
- ❑ 5+ oz. box instant mashed potatoes
- ❑ 14 oz. bag stuffing mix (or 2 boxes stuffing mix)
- ❑ 14 oz. macaroni and cheese (shells)
- ❑ 18.4 oz. brownie mix
- ❑ 8 ct. hot chocolate mix
- ❑ 10 oz. bag marshmallows



This year, the Christmas Toy Store is taking on a fresh format! We're partnering with Community Crossroads to help 100 families celebrate the season with joy and generosity.

How You Can Participate:

Shop the Amazon Wish List

- Scan the QR code to access our curated Amazon wish list, featuring toys that families have preselected. All items purchased through the list will be shipped directly to the church.



Prefer to shop elsewhere?

- If you choose to buy a gift from another vendor, please ensure it matches a toy from the Amazon wish list and deliver it to the church by November 16.

Prefer to give financially and let someone else do the shopping?

- For cash or checks, please write "Christmas Toy Store" in the memo line.
- To give online, scan the QR code here and select "Christmas Store" as the fund.



On December 13, families will visit First Pres to pick up their pre-bagged gifts, select a book for each child, and enjoy festive Christmas activities alongside First Pres families. Thank you for helping make this Christmas bright for our community!

Questions? Contact Robyn (robyn@fpcf.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266).

Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,

I've had a number of conversations lately about what it means to live intentionally right now. Whether you

are raising young children, making decisions to downsize your housing, thinking about how you might live out your faith, or considering how to find a slice of silence in the day-to-day hustle, living with intention seems to be difficult to grasp. I've heard you say, "the hits keep coming," "I'm just surviving," "We have one thing after another." And, all of that is true.

It's almost as if our pace of life has usurped our abilities to think through what we find important, meaningful, life-giving. We're floating from one activity to the next, one decision to the next and there's not much space for discernment, consideration, intentionality. I wonder, what would it look like to actually be able to think through your life goals, your family goals, or even think through just the next few weeks without being constrained by a to-do list?

Turns out scripture has some insight for us on living intentionally. Colossians 3:17 says "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,

do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Proverbs 16:3 says "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." Romans 12:2 says "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect."

There is no escaping the speed at which life is happening around us or to us, but the way we respond to it can certainly be more intentional. And, I would propose that our path forward, no matter which season of life we're in, should be grounded in the intention of love. Dorothy Day says, "there is nothing we can do but love, and dear God, please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as our friend." May we at least have that intention as we head into this season of added holiday delight and stress. May love be our guiding intention in all the activities to which we proclaim a resounding yes and those we decline, may love be our guiding intention as we struggle through hard relationships, and may you be reminded of the God who claims you, loves you, and invites you into abundant life.

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
Brian Wharry

2027 CLASS OF ELDERS

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

Submissions

Submissions for the next issue of the *Penn Street Letter* are due Wednesday, November 19. Submissions for the weekly *Penn Street Online* emailed newsletters are due the Wednesday prior to each week's issue. Have photos or a story idea you'd like to share? Scan the QR code here to submit!



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.

Your Voice Matters: Learn & Vote on Upcoming Property Purchase

There will be a congregational meeting immediately after the 11 a.m. service on Sunday, November 16 for the purpose of a property purchase.

To provide more information ahead of the meeting, an informational session will take place on Sunday, November 9, immediately after the 11 a.m. service in Room 235.

First Pres Scholarships Return to Support Students in 2026–2027

We're thrilled to announce that Pres will once again be offering scholarships for the upcoming 2026–2027 academic year! These scholarships aim to encourage and support:

- High school seniors graduating in Spring of 2026
- Individuals seeking to continue their educational journey

Members of the First Pres Youth group, active participants in Community Crossroads, and children of First Pres staff members are eligible.

Further eligibility details and application forms will become available in January 2026. Application deadline is March 31, 2026.

Questions? Reach out to Marisa (mpinon@fpcfw.org) or Susana (sleon@fpcfw.org) at 817.335.1231.

October Session Highlights

First Presbyterian Church's Session met on Sunday, October 19. Highlights from that meeting included the following items:

- Report from Melinda Anderson on Long-Term Benefits Strategy for church employees
- Approved Salt and Light Dental Clinic expansion and grant
- 3rd quarter update from Finance, Personnel and Trustees
- Approved a called Congregational meeting for November 16, 2025, the purpose for purchase of property.
- Sustainable Stewardship presentation given by Al Comeaux and Herd Midkiff



Each month we'll highlight First Pres staff team updates.

NOVEMBER SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

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

David Hoppe, Chief Engineer/Facilities Manager, 1 year

Brenda Holsinger, Assistant Teacher (3s), 3 years

Keri Casciari, Ministry Assistant, 8 years

NOVEMBER Calendar Highlights

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

SUNDAYS IN NOVEMBER

- 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
- 11:20 a.m. Younger Children's Choir
- 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. All Youth Dinner
- 6 p.m. High School Youth Group

MONDAYS IN NOVEMBER

- 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. Tai Chi
- 11 a.m. Spanish as a Second Language Class at Community Crossroads
- 11:30 a.m. Clothing & Sack Lunch Distribution at Community Crossroads
- 6 p.m. Fellowship Ensemble

WEDNESDAYS IN NOVEMBER

- 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 p.m. High School Bible Study

THURSDAYS IN NOVEMBER

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

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1

- 10 a.m. Dia de los Muertos Block Party at Community Crossroads

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2

- 11 a.m. Great Presbyterian Bake Off & All Church Lunch
- 6:30 p.m. Contemplative Worship

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10

- 6:30 p.m. MOMS & Friends Graceful Aging Event & Dinner

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24

- 6 p.m. Outdoor Movie Night in the Memorial Garden

THURSDAY & FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27-28

First Pres closed for Thanksgiving

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30

- 12 p.m. Great Christmas Decorating Day
- 12:15 p.m. Advent Wreath Workshop & Lunch

Be Inspired

Upcoming Family Activities at First Pres

Advent Wreath Workshop – November 30, 12:15–1:30 p.m.

Bring the whole family for lunch and a hands-on Advent Wreath Workshop to prepare for the season. All materials provided, and all ages are welcome.

Outdoor Family Movie Night – November 24, 6–8 p.m.

Join us in the Memorial Garden for a cozy evening of movie-watching under the stars. Bring lawn chairs and blankets, and enjoy hot cocoa with friends. In case of cold or rainy weather, we'll move indoors to the Youth Center.

Experience Worship & Music in the Mountains: Join First Pres at Montreat



First Presbyterian is organizing a group trip to the 2026 Worship & Music Conference at Montreat Conference Center, taking place June 20–27. This inspiring week offers opportunities for spiritual renewal, musical enrichment, and fellowship in a beautiful mountain setting.

Interested in learning more? Scan the QR code to complete the interest form and receive trip details as they become available.

Order Christmas Poinsettias

in Honor and Memory of Loved Ones

The First Pres Worship & Music Committee will place live poinsettia plants in the worship spaces from December 12–25. You may purchase a plant in honor or memory of loved ones by scanning the QR code here or by contacting



Deneice (dallen@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231) in the church office. Deadline is December 12. Cost is \$25 per plant. Plants may be taken home after worship on Sunday, December 28. Plants not picked up will be delivered to homebound members.

Ongoing Support Opportunities at First Pres

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP: 1ST MONDAYS

Caring for a loved one can be both rewarding and challenging. If you're a primary caregiver looking for a space to connect, share experiences, and find support, come be a part of meaningful conversation on the first Monday of each month at 10:30 a.m. in Room 102. Questions? Reach out to Ashley (adrakemertz@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 264).

THIRD THIRD OF LIFE MONTHLY GATHERINGS: 3RD WEDNESDAYS

The Third Third of Life gathering is for those seeking connection and purposeful living in the third third (60ish and over) of life. Gatherings focus on topics such as spiritual growth and discernment, community and connection, health and well-being, and life planning and purpose. We meet on the 3rd Wednesdays at 9:15 a.m. for fellowship with pastries and coffee and at 9:30–10:30 a.m. for programming in Room 310. Questions? Reach out to Robyn (robynm@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266) or Ashley (adrakemertz@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 264).

MOMS AND FRIENDS IS BACK FOR FALL

MOMS (Mothers Offering Mothers Support) and Friends is a ministry for all mothers of children of all ages and their friends. Come enjoy small group gatherings on the third Thursday of each month in the church Parlor, with lunch and childcare provided at 11:30 a.m., and dinner and childcare at 6:30 p.m. Fall date is November 20. Don't miss the special "Aging Gracefully" event on Monday, November 10 from 6:30 to 8 p.m., with dinner included. Questions? Contact Robyn (robynm@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266) or Ann (anielsen@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 232).

MONTHLY GRANDPARENTS GATHERING

Connect with fellow grandparents who are actively involved in raising grandchildren or supporting their adult children in parenthood. This monthly gathering offers a welcoming space to connect, share ideas, and encourage one another on this unique journey. Enjoy coffee and conversation in the Parlor every second Thursday from 9:30–10:30 a.m. Questions? Contact Robyn (robynm@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266).

FAITHFUL ACTION & RESPONSE: 3RD TUESDAYS

Faithful Action and Response (FAR) meets on the third Tuesdays from 8:30–9:30 a.m. in the Youth Center for those discerning how to live out their faith intentionally in a divisive world. Each gathering has time for spiritual practices and ways to engage faithfully in a polarized and political climate. Questions? Reach out to Robyn (robynm@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266) or Ashley (adrakemertz@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 264).

Engage the World



Christmas Party FOR THE BLIND

First Pres Youth are hosting the annual Christmas Party for the Blind on Sunday, December 7 at 6 p.m. in the Great Hall. This will be our 80th year hosting this meaningful Christmas celebration, which welcomes visually impaired guests and their caregivers/families to enjoy an evening of food, fellowship, entertainment, and gifts.

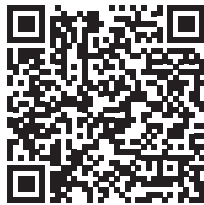
We rely on volunteers to help us transport guests to and from the party. If you would be willing to be a driver (invited to stay for dinner and the party) scan the QR code here to register.

If you know of someone who is visually impaired that would like to attend, scan the QR code here to register.

VOLUNTEER DRIVER REGISTRATION:



GUEST REGISTRATION:



If you would like additional information or have any questions, please contact Becky (bquick@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 265).

In September 2025, Community Crossroads:

- Provided **1,450** households with groceries
- Provided **318** individuals with clothing
- Served **903** sack lunches
- Provided pet food to **383** pet owners
- Provided **214** hygiene items to individuals
- Provided **209** cleaning products to individuals
- Provided **653** packages of diapers and **229** cans of formula to parents
- A dedicated team of **152** volunteers contributed a remarkable total of **1,761** hours of service!

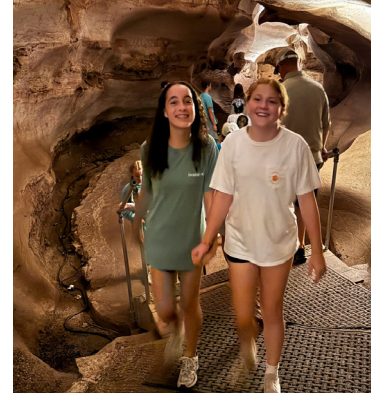


Community Crossroads recently celebrated Volunteer Appreciation Week by recognizing the amazing volunteers who faithfully serve neighbors each week. Your kindness, teamwork and commitment shine bright. Thank you!





Our group of 26 youth, kids, and adults had a wonderful time at our “In Tents” Youth & Kids Family Camping Trip to Enchanted Rock over Fall Break in October! Our theme was “Let there be...” and it was a great time to unplug and do just that in God’s creation. Hiking together, capture the flag, the “Star Party” with the Austin Astronomical Society, and touring Longhorn Caverns were some highlights.



Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of October 23. 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 Visitor Matt McGraw. Let us keep the following persons in our thoughts and prayers this month...

Our loving sympathy to...

The family and friends of **Mildred Hogan** following her death on October 18, 2025.

The family and friends of **Jay Stepp** following his death on October 11, 2025. Surviving First Pres family member includes his wife, **Liz Stepp**.

The family and friends of David Kruse following his death on October 12, 2025. Surviving First Pres family members include his sister and brother-in-law, **Barbara and Ralph Reece**.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Jack Jones, Jackie Taylor, Phil Grossman, Carol Sue Hammett, Heather

Martin, Gail Stewart, Wil'lwin Chocola, Steve Brotherton, Nancy Lynn Scott, Gaylon Peyton, Ann Biggs, Pat Graham, Martha Brooks, Ronnie Sherwood, Pat Richardson, and Irene Howard who are recovering from surgery or injury. We also pray for their caregivers.

Benjamin Adams, and parents **Will and Lauren Adams, Elizabeth McCartney, 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, 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...

Dan Lyne (brother-in-law of **Sam Steele**), **Haley Twilligear** (stepdaughter of Deneice Allen), **David Gallegos** (First Pres staff), **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**), **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**), and **John DeMore** (son-in-law of **June Sprott**).

Prayers for the safety of **Rolf Tilley**, (son of **Jaret and Katie Tilley**) who is stationed in Turkey with the U.S. Navy. 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.




THE GREAT PRESBYTERIAN
BAKE OFF


SUNDAY NOV 2
11:30 - 1 P.M. | GREAT HALL

Join us for the Great Presbyterian Bake Off! Enjoy a free lunch and sample delicious baked goods, or bring your own to share. Categories will include cakes, pies, cookies/bars, and youth entries. Not a baker? Come hungry and ready to taste!

Sponsored by The Wellness Together Committee



THE
Penn
Street
Letter

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

A graphic of various autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and red, scattered across a teal background.

GRACE, GRATITUDE & *Grub*

Nov 16 | 4:30-6 P.M.
Located on the 3rd Floor Concourse

Invite your whole family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc...). We will feast together, give thanks, and have interactive learning stations about gratitude.

