

THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

FEBRUARY 2026 / VOLUME 26, NUMBER 2



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

ASH WEDNESDAY: FEBRUARY 18

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 fpcfw.org/livestream.

MIDDAY PRAYER SERVICES:

WEDNESDAYS, FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 25 AT 12 P.M.

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

AFTERNOON CONCERTS:

WEDNESDAYS, FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 25 AT 12:30 P.M.

Enjoy a 30-minute organ concert by a guest organist immediately following the Noon Lent services. A complimentary light lunch will be served after each

concert. For the schedule of guest organists, visit fpcfw.org/pennstreetarts.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES ROOM

The Spiritual Disciplines Room (Room 230) will be a quiet, welcoming space where all ages are invited to practice ways of drawing closer to God during the season of Lent. Each week during Lent, the room will highlight different spiritual disciplines reflected in worship, such as, prayer, community, silence and service. Come as you are, linger as long as you like, and discover how these disciplines might shape our Lenten journey together.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: DISCERNMENT AND ACTION

Gather to practice discernment of how our faith, personally and communally, leads us into action for justice, mercy, and healing as we discuss the book *For Such a Time as This: An Emergency Devotional*, by Hanna Reichel. We'll gather in the Youth Center on Wednesdays at 1:30 throughout Lent, beginning February 25, ending March 25. Scan the QR code here to register.



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@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231). May we have a holy Lent as we journey toward Holy Week and Easter.

Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,

The month of February is a full and rich month for worship at First Pres. It is also a month of

very different experiences woven together with the regular rhythm of our worship. We will continue to worship weekly on Sundays at 8 a.m., 9 a.m., and 11 a.m. on Penn Street, and at 5:30 p.m. at WOW (Community Crossroads.) 11 a.m. will also serve as the weekly Sunday worship time for our digital community worshipping via livestream.

February 1 centers on the Scottish heritage we share as Presbyterians. The Kirkin' of the Tartans service at 11 a.m. includes bagpipes, a procession of tartans, special music, a guest preacher, and a celebration lunch following the service. 500+ people, including many visitors and guests, will fill the sanctuary for this joyful service.

February 18 is Ash Wednesday, with worship at 12 noon and 7 p.m. on Penn Street and at 5:30 p.m. at WOW. The Ash Wednesday services mark the beginning of the season of Lent. Through reading of scripture,

preaching, prayers, music, the imposition of ashes, and celebration of the Lord's Supper, we humbly mark this season with repentance, reconciliation, and recommitment to our Christian discipleship.

February 25 begins the weekly Lent Midday Prayer series of Wednesday worship at 12 noon in the Sanctuary. The spiritual practice of lectio divina (divine reading of scripture) will be the focus of these services as part of the broader Lenten theme of Disciplines Delight.

February is the shortest month of the year, yet we will gather to worship 19 times as a community of faith. Thousands of people will hear God's word read and proclaimed, pray and sing together, celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion, receive the imposition of ashes, and experience the fellowship of the church through radical hospitality. May you worship often this month as we experience God's love in inspiring and deeply meaningful ways.

God's peace,

Michael

First Presbyterian Church's Session

2026 CLASS OF ELDERS

Julia Bradley
Al Comeaux
Emily Hadley
Janie Lesok
Jane Mathis
Andrew Michalove
Nancy O'Malley
J.B. Smithson
Brian Wharry

2027 CLASS OF ELDERS

Mark Beasley
Cesar Chavez
Mike Henry
Judith Kinser
Ashli Smick
Judy Stricklin
Burch Waldron

2028 CLASS OF ELDERS

Elizabeth Carlock
Blair Chappell
Beverly Howard
Becky Jenkins
George Morey
Thomas Parsons
Mark Russell

Submissions

Submissions for the next issue of the *Penn Street Letter* are due Wednesday, February 25. 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

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people first at
First Pres

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

FEBRUARY SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

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

Michelle Goodwin, Senior Director, Operations, 2 years

MaLinda Morehead, Program Manager, Community Crossroads, 4 years

Corey Sceales, Lead Teacher (Toddlers), 2 years



First Pres Kids

Summer 2026: Save the Dates!

We can't wait for Summer 2026! We are so excited for the ways we will be able to learn, grow and have fun together. Registrations open March 1 at fpcfw.org/kidsummer.

Vacation Bible School

Dates: June 8-12, Time: 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Ages: For 3-years-old (January 1, 2026) through entering 6th Grade
Cost: \$25

Elementary Music and Arts Camp

Dates: June 8-12, Time: 12-4 p.m.
Ages: For entering 1st through 6th Grade
Cost: \$75, Optional Lunch: \$14

Music and Arts Camp Jr.

Dates: July 13-17, Time: 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Ages: 4-years-old (as of July 1, 2026) through entering 1st Grade
Cost: \$50

Mission on the Move

Dates: July 20-24, Time: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Ages: For entering 3rd through 6th Grade
Cost: \$25

Summit46 Conference at Mo-Ranch

Dates: June 16-19
Time: Overnight
Ages: For entering 4th through 6th Grade
Cost: \$185

FEBRUARY Calendar Highlights

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

SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY

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. All Youth Dinner
6 p.m. High School Youth Group

MONDAYS IN FEBRUARY

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
11:20 a.m. Busy Women's Bible Study
11:30 a.m. Clothing & Sack Lunch Distribution at Community Crossroads
4 p.m. Room in the Inn

WEDNESDAYS IN FEBRUARY

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 FEBRUARY

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

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

11 a.m. Kirkin' of the Tartans Worship & Lunch

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

12 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship (Chapel)
5:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship at WOW
7 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship (Sanctuary & livestream)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

10 a.m. Lenten Lectio Covenant Group begins
4:30 p.m. How Faith Develops

Be Inspired

Love God: Heart, Soul, Body and Mind: February 21

This 5-hour workshop is offered on a Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with lunch provided for a fee. The morning is given over to familiarizing yourself with Corrine Ware's *Four Quadrants of Spirituality*, doing an inventory to determine in which quadrants you are naturally open to receiving and responding to God, and those in which you are currently closed and in need of growth. Using this information, you will be given the opportunity to prepare a growth plan which best brings you into loving God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your strength, and all your mind. The afternoon provides an opportunity to learn various contemplative prayer types that encourage growth in each quadrant. Learn more and register at fpcf.org/spiritualformation or using the QR code here.



How Faith Develops: February 22

Join the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski on Sunday, February 22 from 4:30-5:45 p.m. in Room 235 for an informative and engaging seminar on how faith develops in children, youth, and adults. This seminar is empowering for parents and grandparents as they navigate the developmental journey of children and youth as well as all adults as they examine their own faith growth and journey. Following the seminar, a free dinner is provided. Childcare is available during the seminar. To register, scan the QR code here or contact Becky Quick (bquick@fpcf.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 265) in the church office.



Lenten Lectio Covenant Group begins February 22

Lectio Divina, or devotional reading, is a prayer practice for communing with God which comes to us from monastic tradition. Through slow, meditative reading of Scripture, focusing on listening for God's voice rather than on intellectual understanding, lectio typically involves four movements: Reading, Reflection, Prayerful response, and Resting in God's presence. This contemplative practice helps deepen one's relationship with God by allowing Scripture to speak personally, moving from hearing the text to responding to it from the heart and soul. Beginning on February 22 and continuing through March 29, Linda Northern, Karen Hosch, and Glenn Pense will facilitate a Sunday morning covenant group during the church school hour. The group will covenant to worship at the 9 a.m. service, then to meet in room 100 from 10-11:30 a.m. to



practice lectio, thus inviting a deeper personal response to that day's lectionary. Learn more and register at fpcf.org/spiritualformation or using the QR code here.

Nominate Class of 2029 Elders Today

The Nominating Committee is requesting recommendations from the congregation for next year's class of Ruling Elders. Active members of First Pres may recommend other active members, or themselves, to the Nominating Committee for consideration. Recommendations from the congregation are essential to the work of the Committee.

The spiritual growth and development of the congregation is entrusted to our Ruling Elders. These are not honorary positions or rewards. They are offices requiring wisdom and maturity, exercised in service. Ruling Elders elected in the upcoming cycle will serve on the Session of First Pres for a three-year term beginning January 2027.



Please submit your recommendations using the QR code here. Please direct any questions to Judith Kinser, Moderator of the Nominating Committee (kinserjudith@gmail.com).

Spring School of Spiritual Formation offering: Follow Me begins March 15

Jesus said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life," and throughout his ministry he simply invited people to "Follow Me."

What might happen if we took that seriously—if we paid attention to how he lived, how he stayed close to God, listened for God's voice, and fulfilled his purpose? What if we truly heard what he taught his disciples, the crowds, the Pharisees, and the downtrodden?

And what if we used the disciplines Jesus practiced as a model for living faithfully "in God" and "with others"?

As this spring's School of Spiritual Formation course, Martha Newman and Carol Toombs will identify ten life disciplines Jesus lived by – disciplines such as discernment, surrender, simplicity, hospitality, justice, and reconciliation. In so doing, they will borrow the wisdom of modern spiritual thinkers to flesh out what is meant by each of these and to learn how we can best incorporate these disciplines into our own lives.

Follow Me will meet from 2-4 p.m. on Sundays March 15 through May 31 (no meeting Easter Sunday, April 5) in Room 238. This two-hour time frame will better allow for the deep, transformative learning we hope for to take place. Learn more and register at fpcf.org/spiritualformation or using the QR code here.



Engage the World

Hear Bryan Stevenson at TCU's Dream Justice Event, February 23



Join Circles of Christ on Monday, February 23 at 6 p.m. as we attend a talk given by Bryan Stevenson, author of the acclaimed book *Just Mercy* and founder and Executive Director of the

Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), a human rights organization in Montgomery, Alabama.

Under his leadership, EJI has won major legal challenges eliminating excessive and unfair sentencing, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, confronting abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill, and aiding children prosecuted as adults.

Mr. Stevenson has argued and won multiple cases at the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Stevenson and his staff have won reversals, relief, or release from prison for over 140 wrongly condemned prisoners on death row and won relief for hundreds of others wrongly convicted or unfairly sentenced.

Mr. Stevenson has initiated major new anti-poverty and anti-discrimination efforts that challenge inequality in America. He led the creation of EJI's highly acclaimed Legacy Sites, including the Legacy Museum, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, and Freedom Monument Sculpture Park. These new national landmark institutions chronicle the legacy of slavery, lynching, and racial segregation, and the connection to mass incarceration and contemporary issues of racial bias.

Mr. Stevenson has received over 50 honorary doctoral degrees, including degrees from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, and Oxford University. He is the author of the critically acclaimed New York Times bestseller, *Just Mercy*. He is a graduate of the Harvard Law School and the Harvard School of Government.

The 2nd Annual Dream Justice Event is sponsored by Brite

Divinity School's Center for Theology and Justice, in collaboration with TCU's Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice. The event will take place at TCU's BLUU Ballroom (3rd Floor of the Brown-Lupton University Union: 2901 Stadium Dr.). Scan the QR code here to register.



In 2025, Community Crossroads:

- Provided **17,226** households with groceries
- Provided **3,612** individuals with clothing
- Served **9,089** sack lunches
- Provided pet food to **4,283** pet owners
- Provided **2,407** hygiene items to individuals
- Provided **2,303** cleaning products to individuals
- Provided **7,125** packages of diapers and **2,292** cans of formula to parents
- Ran **37** dental clinics offering **271** dental visits
- A dedicated team of **2,321** volunteers contributed a remarkable total of **21,227** hours of service!



First Pres Youth

First Pres youth had a busy month between the annual ski trip, a meal packing mission project with First Pres Kids, and a New Year's Eve party!



Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of January 21, 2025. 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

Our loving sympathy to...

The family and friends of Judy Schmoker following her death on January 21, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her granddaughter and grandson-in-law, **Devyn and Cody Woodruff**.

The family and friends of Leota Tyner following her death on January 20, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her daughter and son-in-law **Karen Redrow and David Hamre**; grandson and granddaughter-in-law, **Colin and Jilian Redrow**; grandson and granddaughter-in-law, **Grant** and Leigh Ann Redrow, and great-grandchildren Vivian, Seve, Lucy, Leota, and Robin Redrow.

The family and friends of Patrick Yurasek following his death on January 19, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include his son and daughter-in-law, Chris and Claire Yurasek, grandson, Caleb Yurasek, and granddaughter, Cate Yurasek.

The family and friends of **Allison Brockett Johnson** following her death on January 7, 2026. Surviving First Pres family member is her husband, **Charlie Johnson**.

The family and friends of Craig Russell following his death on December 30, 2025. Surviving First Pres family members include his son and daughter-in-law, **Mark and Laura Russell**, and granddaughter, Elizabeth

Russell.

The family and friends of Paul Smith following his death on December 27, 2025. Surviving First Pres family members include his parents **Cecil and Ann Smith**, and brother and sister-in-law, **Robert Smith and Sue Austin**.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Darrell Lester, William King, Jr., Joyce Norris, Gene Colvin, Mark Beasley, Charlie Gibbs, Clif Smith, Sharon Sullivan, Mary Elizabeth Austin, Jack Jones, Jackie Taylor, Phil Grossman, Heather Martin, Gail Stewart, Wil'lwin Chocola, Steve Brotherton, Nancy Lynn Scott, Gaylon Peyton, Ann Biggs, Pat Graham, Ronnie Sherwood, Pat Richardson, and Irene Howard who are recovering from surgery or injury. We also pray for their caregivers.

John Pumphrey, Benjamin Adams, and parents **Will and Lauren Adams, Elizabeth McCartney, 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, and Karl Travis** who are dealing with illness or undergoing treatment. We also pray for their caregivers.

Our Caring Prayers for Extended Family include...

Max Hamre (son of **David Hamre**), Chris Austin (cousin of **Sean Austin**), Joel Ballew (father of **Bryan Ballew**), Dan Lyne (brother-in-law of **Sam Steele**), Martha Meador (mother of **Martha Letbetter**), Lonnie Goolsby (father of **Kelle Tillman**), Lucy Redrow (daughter of Leigh Ann and **Grant Redrow**), Jack Barber (son of **Liz Barber**), Terry James (nephew of **Rachele Williams**), Tahji Hoffman (great-niece of **Rachele Williams**), 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 Normont**), 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.

January Session Highlights

First Presbyterian Church's Session met on Monday, January 11. Highlights from that meeting included the following items:

- Heard reports from the Senior Leadership Team on the "State of the Church."
- Approved the 2025 Annual Church Statistical Report.
- Welcomed the new class of elders.
- Voted to approve the 2026 church budget.



First Presbyterian Church

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A promotional poster for the "Kirkin' of the Tartans" event. The background is a green and white diamond-patterned tartan. In the center, there is a large, stylized white cross with a blue outline. To the left of the cross, the text "First Presbyterian Church FORT WORTH" is written in white. To the right of the cross, the title "Kirkin' OF THE Tartans" is written in large, white, serif font. Below the title, a white rectangular box contains the text "FEBRUARY 1 | 11 A.M." in black, sans-serif font. The bottom of the poster shows a blurred image of a crowd of people.