

# THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

MARCH 2026 / VOLUME 26, NUMBER 3

## Lent & Easter at First Pres: Opportunities to Worship, Reflect & Celebrate

### MIDDAY PRACTICES & CONCERTS: WEDNESDAYS THROUGH MARCH 25 AT 12 P.M.

These 30-minute services at 12 p.m. in the Sanctuary each Wednesday gather around scripture, prayer, and music as we practice the ancient discipline of *lectio divina* (divine reading of scripture). Immediately following the services, enjoy a 30-minute organ concert by a guest organist. A complimentary light lunch will be served after each concert. For the schedule of guest organists, visit [fpcf.org/pennstreetarts](http://fpcf.org/pennstreetarts).

### FIND MIDWEEK PEACE IN THE 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.

### PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29

8 a.m. in the Chapel

9 a.m. in the Great Hall

11 a.m. in the Sanctuary or livestream at [fpcf.org/livestream](http://fpcf.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, MARCH 30-APRIL 1

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 2

12 p.m. Worship in the Chapel

5:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday Dinner & Worship in the Great Hall

7 p.m. Worship in the Sanctuary or livestream at [fpcf.org/livestream](http://fpcf.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 3

12 p.m. Worship in the Chapel

7 p.m. Tenebrae Service in the Sanctuary or livestream at [fpcf.org/livestream](http://fpcf.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 Weekend

Easter Egg Hunt & Breakfast  
Saturday, April 4 • 9–10 a.m.

Families and children are invited for breakfast followed by an egg hunt.

## Easter Sunday • April 5

Help Decorate the Flowering Cross

Continue this Easter tradition by adding flowers to the cross outside the Sanctuary entrance (weather permitting). Bring any flowers - yard blooms or store-bought. Greenery is provided. The cross will fill with color throughout the morning, symbolizing the joy of resurrection. In case of rain, the cross will be on the 3rd floor concourse outside the Great Hall.

Sunrise Service

7 a.m. • Memorial Garden

Celebrate the resurrection outdoors at dawn. Chairs provided. (Rain location: Youth Center.)

Easter Breakfast Buffet

8:30–11 a.m. • 3rd Floor Concourse

A free, come-and-go continental breakfast and time for fellowship.

Worship Services

8 a.m. Chapel

9 a.m. Great Hall

11 a.m. Sanctuary or livestream

Celebrate the joy of Easter as we proclaim, "He is risen! He is risen indeed!"

# Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,

What a gift to share in our practice of faith as a church community! Together in this season of Lent, we

are stretching our spiritual muscles together as we engage in practices that open up new spaces for our love of God and neighbor. As we delight together in spiritual disciplines in worship, in covenant groups, in service, in prayer, God is collectively stretching our congregation to grow into all that God creates us to be.

I don't know about you, but it is always easier for me to exercise with other people. I like a walking buddy to encourage me or a someone to meet me at the gym so I am held accountable for actually going! And the same goes for spiritual practices. We can be more accountable when we practice collectively. Over these

weeks of Lent, we are focusing on a few disciplines: silence and solitude, community, scripture, mission and service, and prayer. We gather for worship, midweek practices, prayer, and study because we belong to one another. Thank God that the journey of faith is not a solo expedition!

Wherever you find yourself in this Lenten season, we are invited to stretch our faith together. In fact, lent comes from the Old English word lencten, meaning lengthen. In one sense, the days are lengthening in spring as we move towards more daylight, and also we are lengthening our surrender and trust in God as we engage in the delight of spiritual practices as God's beloved community.

Keep on stretching on!

## February Session Highlights

First Presbyterian Church's Session met on Sunday, February 15. Highlights from that meeting included the following items:

- Heard 4th Quarter Investments report
- Heard an update on Summit Property.
- Approved Commissioners for Grace Presbytery meeting in Flower Mound this month.
- Heard the 2026 Stewardship Campaign Report.

### 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, March 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



@fpcfww

## Publisher Info

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people first at  
**First Pres**

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

### **MARCH SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES**

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

**Pandora Gonzales**, Assistant Teacher (2s), 3 years

**Marisa Pinon**, Director, Finance & Accounting, 10 years

**Becky Quick**, Ministry Assistant, 4 years

## Ongoing Support Opportunities at First Pres

### **CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP**

**1ST MONDAYS | 10:30 A.M. | ROOM 105**

Caring for a loved one can be both rewarding and challenging. This monthly group offers space to connect, share experiences, and find support. Questions? Contact Ashley (adrakemertz@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 264).

### **THIRD THIRD OF LIFE MONTHLY GATHERINGS**

**3RD WEDNESDAYS | 9:30 A.M. | ROOM 102**

The Third Third of Life gathering is for those seeking connection and purposeful living in the third third (60ish and over) of life. Each gathering explores topics like spiritual growth, community, health, and life planning. Pastries and coffee provided. Questions? Contact Robyn (robyn@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266) or Ashley (adrakemertz@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 264).

### **MONTHLY GRANDPARENTS GATHERING**

**2ND THURSDAYS | 9:30 A.M. | PARLOR**

A welcoming group for grandparents raising grandchildren or supporting adult children in parenthood. Enjoy coffee, community, and shared wisdom. Questions? Contact Robyn (robyn@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266).

### **FAITHFUL ACTION & RESPONSE**

**3RD TUESDAYS | 8:30 A.M. | YOUTH CENTER**

Join others discerning how to live out faith intentionally in a polarized world. Each gathering includes spiritual practices and conversation around engaging faithfully in today's climate. Questions? Contact Robyn (robyn@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266) or Ashley (adrakemertz@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 264).



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

### **SUNDAYS IN MARCH**

- 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 MARCH**

- 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

### **WEDNESDAYS IN MARCH**

- 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
- 12 p.m. Lent Midday Practice & Organ Concert
- 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 MARCH**

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

### **THURSDAY, MARCH 5**

- 6 p.m. All Men's Ministry at Heim BBQ on the River

### **SUNDAY, MARCH 15**

Spring Break! No Children or Youth afternoon activities

### **FRIDAY, MARCH 27**

- 6:30 p.m. Easter Eggstravaganza for 1st-5th Grades

### **PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29**

- 12 p.m. Stories from Palestine Discussion & Lunch

# Be Inspired

## The Presbyterian Outlook at 200+: Sunday, March 15

On Sunday, March 15 at 10 a.m. in Room 235, we welcome Rev. Dr. Teri McDowell Ott, Editor and Publisher of *The Presbyterian Outlook*, for a special presentation. Teri will trace the *Presbyterian Outlook's* 200+ year legacy as the only independent, self-sustaining publisher serving the PC(USA) and beyond - connecting its historic role as a prophetic voice with today's efforts to engage new audiences. She will share current data on the U.S. religious landscape, situating the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) within broader cultural trends, and highlight how the *Outlook* is expanding its reach through digital growth, creative use of resources, and engaging content that resonates with a diverse audience - ensuring Presbyterian voices and stories are heard in the church and in the wider world.

## Scholarship Application Deadline is March 16

First Pres is once again offering scholarships for the 2026–2027 academic year. These scholarships are designed to encourage and support the educational goals of our church community. High school seniors graduating in Spring 2026 who are members of the First Pres Youth Group, active participants in Community Crossroads, children of First Pres staff members, or members of any age seeking to begin or continue their education are encouraged to apply. The deadline to apply is March 16, 2026, and recipients will be notified via email the week of April 20, 2026.



**Returning scholarship recipients**  
scan the QR code here to reapply quickly.



**New applicants or those updating their information** scan the QR code here for the full application process.

Investing in education is one of the ways First Pres lives out its commitment to nurture and empower future generations. We encourage all eligible members to take advantage of this opportunity!

Questions? Contact Marisa at [mpinon@fpcfw.org](mailto:mpinon@fpcfw.org) or Susana at [sleon@fpcfw.org](mailto:sleon@fpcfw.org), or call 817.335.1231.

## Spring School of Spiritual Formation: What Would Happen if We Truly Followed Jesus?

Jesus said, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. And the invitation he extended, time and time again during his three-year ministry, was simply, "Follow Me."

What would happen if we took Jesus seriously, if we paid attention to how he lived his life on earth? How he managed to keep close to God and listen for God's word to him? How he managed to live out the purpose God had ordained for him?

What would happen if we listened attentively to what he taught his disciples, the crowds, the Pharisees, and the downtrodden?

And what would happen if we were to take the disciplines he followed in his own life as a template for faithfully living out our lives "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.

To learn more about upcoming Spiritual Formation offerings or register for this course, visit [fpcfw.org/spiritualformation](http://fpcfw.org/spiritualformation)



JOIN  
**TEAM FIRST PRES**  
MARCH 7

This annual 5K and 1 mile fun run helps raise funds to support children and families at The WARM Place.

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

# Engage the World



## Anniversary Celebration & Prayer Vigil: March 7 & 8

You're invited to be a part of a meaningful 24 hours of prayer, gratitude, and celebration as we give thanks for our long-standing partnerships with our sisters and brothers in Cuba.

We'll begin together on Saturday with a prayer vigil kickoff featuring a labyrinth walk - a reflective way to enter into prayer for our Cuban partners and the shared ministry that connects us.

After the kickoff, members of the congregation are invited to sign up for a prayer hour anytime over the next 24 hours. Whether you pray at home, at church, or wherever you may be, your participation weaves us together in faithful solidarity and shared purpose.

Our 24 hours will conclude on Sunday as we celebrate communion at all three worship services, giving thanks for the unity we share in Christ. On that same day, our partner churches in Cuba will also celebrate communion and the anniversary of our partnership, joining us in spirit and in prayer. After worship, everyone is invited to a celebratory lunch in the Youth Center (RSVP requested).

Come walk, pray, worship, and break bread as we honor God's work among us and with our Cuban partners.

### Saturday, March 7

- **Labyrinth Walk at the First Pres Labyrinth - 11 a.m.**
- **Scan the QR code here to commit to a personal prayer hour**



### Sunday, March 8

- **Worship with Communion - 8, 9, and 11 a.m.**
- **Cuba Celebration Lunch - 12 noon in the Youth Center (RSVP using the QR code here)**



## Stories from Palestine: March 29

Join Alejandro Salazar, Interim Young Adult Coordinator and lifelong member of First Pres, as he shares personal reflections from his recent trip to the Holy Land in Palestine. Alejandro will offer stories of hardship, resilience, and the unmistakable presence of God amid conflict. Through firsthand testimony and thoughtful historical context, he invites us into deeper prayer, greater compassion, and faithful, informed engagement with our global neighbors. We'll gather on Sunday, March 29, at noon in Room 238 with lunch provided. Please RSVP using the QR code here.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT WORTH

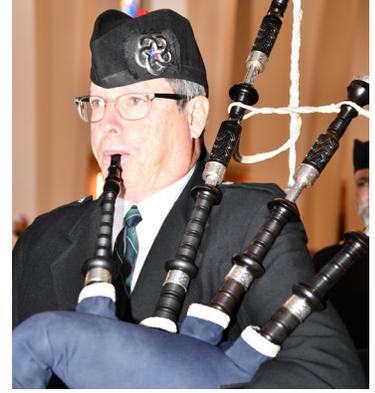
## Community Crossroads

### In January 2026, Community Crossroads:

- Provided **1,209** households with groceries
- Provided **241** individuals with clothing
- Served **570** sack lunches
- Provided pet food to **414** pet owners
- Provided **152** hygiene items to individuals
- Provided **146** cleaning products to individuals
- Provided **273** packages of diapers and **96** cans of formula to parents
- Ran **2** dental clinics
- A dedicated team of **171** volunteers contributed a remarkable total of **1,369** hours of service!



From the 29th annual Kirkin of the Tartans to Ash Wednesday worship and volunteer work at Community Crossroads and a Youth SHYC gathering, First Pres was full of activity! Have photos of First Pres activities to share? Send them to [pamb@fpcf.org](mailto:pamb@fpcf.org)



# Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of February 24, 2026. 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...

*With joy we celebrate...*

The birth of Macy Beth Mitchell in January 2026 to parents Jordan and **Seth Mitchell**. Grandparents are **John and Kay Mitchell**.

The birth of Hallie Josephine Richardson in January 2026 to parents **Matthew and Elizabeth Richardson**. Grandparents are **Evie and Barry Richardson**.

The birth of Sarah Emilia Barrera in September 2025 to parents Sarah and Ryan Barrera. Grandparents are **Evie and Barry Richardson**.

The birth of Harriett Hoppe Phillips in January 2026 to parents **Austin and Blitz Phillips**. She joins big brothers Heath and Hardy.

*Our loving sympathy to...*

The family and friends of **Tom Nezworski** following his death on February 19, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include his daughter and son-in-law, **Katharine and Lance Langner**; son and daughter-in-law, **Christopher and Keely Nezworski**; and grandchildren: **Luke and Emma Langner** and **Bowie and Forte Nezworski**.

The family and friends of Corinne Williams King following her death on February 8, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her granddaughter and grandson-in-law, **Charlotte and Thomas de la Pena**, and great-grandchildren, **Franklin and Irene**.

The family and friends of Wanda Jo Simpson following her death on

February 7, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her son and daughter-in-law, **Danny and Ann Simpson**.

The family and friends of Gene Anderson following his death on January 27, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include his daughter and son-in-law, **Stephanie and Mike Millar**.

The family and friends of **Connie Wittenbraker** following her death on January 27, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her husband, **Rick Wittenbraker**, her daughter and son-in-law, **Leigh and Hardin Sullivan**, and granddaughter, **Hartley**.

The family and friends of Allen Connolly following his death on January 24, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include his son and daughter-in-law, **Mark and Lisa Connolly** and granddaughters, Rachel and **Megan**.

The family and friends of Jeannette Davis following her death on January 22, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her daughter and son-in-law, **Kay and John Mitchell**.

The family and friends of **Sylvia Melugin** following her death on January 21, 2026.

*Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...*

**Bill Holmes, Susie Kuipers**, Hardy Phillips, son of **Austin and Blitz Phillips**, **Jane Mathis, 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 Chochola, 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...*

Silvia Perez (First Press Staff), John Alt, Michele Hargrave, wife of Blake Hargrave (First Pres Staff), 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 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.

**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](http://WWW.FPCFW.ORG)

## Welcome, New Members!

*Please join the Evangelism Work Group in welcoming these new members who recently joined First Pres.*



**Addie Cunningham** joined First Pres by reaffirmation of faith. She is married to First Pres member Sam Cunningham, and they have two children – Liam (6) and Tansey (3).



**Mable Kapyepye** joined by transfer of membership from St. Philip Presbyterian Church in Hurst. Mable has a 5 year old daughter, Tupo.



**Comfort and Micah Jones** joined by transfer of membership from Fort Worth Presbyterian Church.

They have been part of the First Pres community since 2023 and are active in Young Adult ministry. Micah is the great grandson of First Pres member Jack Jones.



**Alden Krieger** joined by Reaffirmation of Faith. Alden is a student and the son of First Pres member Nate Krieger.