

THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

APRIL 2026 / VOLUME 26, NUMBER 4

1st Annual Children & Youth Spring Retreat in Granbury: Register by April 6!

We're thrilled to open registration for our very first Spring Retreat at Camp El Tesoro in Granbury — a brand-new experience for our church family!

All students (K-12) are invited to join the fun for a weekend, sleep-away retreat designed especially for elementary, middle school, and high school students. Together, we'll step away into God's beautiful creation, strengthen the friendships that bind us together, share in joyful play, and grow more deeply in our faith in Jesus Christ as one community.

Camp El Tesoro, located in Granbury, Texas, on the bend of the Brazos River at Fall Creek, is a 223-acre multi-use camp established in 1934 and accredited by the American Camp Association.

The weekend will feel like a summer camp getaway filled with arts & crafts, fishing, archery, GaGa Ball, 9-Square in the Air, s'mores, nature walks, and so much more! There will be fun activities specifically planned for middle school and high school youth, as well as separate activities designed just for elementary kids...so they won't always be grouped together. There will also be separate lodging for youth and children.

In light of what many of us have been learning about the impact of smartphones and social media on young people, this will be a screen-free retreat. Because we care deeply about the spiritual and emotional formation of our kids and youth, students should not bring phones or personal electronic devices. Our hope is to create space for presence, friendship, and attentiveness to Jesus Christ in community. Adult leaders will have phones available for photos and emergency communication if needed.

- **Grades K-12**
- **April 24-26**
- **Camp El Tesoro**
- **\$100/participant (Scholarships available!)**
- **Register by: April 6**
- **Adult Sponsors Needed!**
- **Screen-free weekend**



Spots are limited for this first-ever weekend camp getaway! Be sure to register before April 6, 2026 by scanning the QR code here. Questions? Contact Ann Nielsen (anielsen@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 232) or Josh Stewart (josh@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 251).



Penn Street Arts presents Dong-ill Shin in Concert April 16

Experience an unforgettable evening of artistry as First Presbyterian Church Fort Worth welcomes internationally acclaimed organist Dong-ill Shin in concert on Thursday, April 16 at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Celebrated around the world for his breathtaking virtuosity, expressive depth, and "impressive precision" (*The Straits Times*), Shin has been praised as "one of the world's most promising talents of his generation" (*Echo Republicain*). With a career spanning prestigious international competitions, major festivals, and broadcasts across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, Shin brings unmatched musicality to every performance. Don't miss this rare opportunity to hear one of today's most captivating organists live in concert.

First Presbyterian Church presents several annual concerts through its Penn Street Arts series, enhancing the richness of music and the arts in the Fort Worth community. All concerts in this series are free and open to the public.

Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,

Here at First Pres, we are entering one of the most meaningful times in the life of the church. Holy

Week invites us to walk closely with Jesus through those final days of his earthly ministry. From the joy of the parade, through the sorrow of the cross, and ultimately to the hope of the empty tomb.

We began with Palm Sunday, remembering Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and how the voices of the crowd quickly shifted that week. This year, we entered that story together through another interactive reading of the Passion from the Gospel of Matthew, allowing us to fully experience the depth and movement of the week.

As the week unfolds, we have many opportunities for all of us to gather for worship and reflection at several key moments. On Maundy Thursday, we remember the Last Supper and Jesus' command to love one another through a noon service in the Chapel, an evening dinner and worship gathering, and a Sanctuary service that night. On Good Friday, we pause to reflect on the weight of the cross with a noon service and a Tenebrae service in the evening.

Then we arrive at Easter Sunday, the day of resurrection and new life! We will gather at sunrise in the Memorial Garden, share in fellowship over breakfast, and celebrate the risen Christ through worship in the Chapel, the Great Hall, and the Sanctuary. Easter is the turning point of our faith, the declaration that death does not have the final word and that God's life-giving power is still at work in us and this world!

But Easter is not just a single day. It begins a season. After Easter Sunday until Pentecost Sunday on May 24, we are invited to live as resurrection people who are shaped by hope, renewed by grace, and sent into the world with purpose. The gospel stories of the risen Christ will continue to guide us in this season in which we will continue to follow where God is leading.

So, we invite you to join us as we join Jesus on this journey. Come to worship. Come to remember. Come and see. And together, let us walk through Holy Week into the joy of Easter and the new life offered to us through the resurrection!

Grace and Peace,

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, April 22. 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



@fpcf

Publisher Info

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people first at First Pres

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

APRIL SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

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

- Brian Coulter**, Pastor, Head Of Staff, 5 years
- David Gallegos**, Maintenance Technician, 5 years
- Wes Hogue**, Accountant, 9 years
- Keydy Kawas**, Assistant Teacher (Infants), 3 years
- Lesly Martinez**, Lead Teacher (2s), 1 year
- Robert Montelongo**, Design & Media Specialist, 1 year
- Christina Nicholson**, Assistant Teacher (4s), 3 years
- Becca Sawyer**, Music Associate, 11 years
- Tesha Shreves**, Nursery Caregiver, 2 years

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT WORTH

ALL MEN'S MINISTRY

May 1-3 | Mo-Ranch Men's Conference

All men ages 13+ are invited to enjoy a God-filled weekend in the wide-open spaces of the Texas Hill Country along the banks of the Guadalupe River at Mo-Ranch. This year's keynote speaker is First Pres' own Rev. Dr. Brian Coulter!

Conference activities will include keynote presentations, worship, song, relaxation and recreation. Workshop courses will be offered covering a wide variety of educational and spiritual topics through five primary categories: Bible study, church, mission, personal development and social issues. Other course opportunities will be available that include a chance to learn new skills, indoors or outdoors. During

Saturday afternoon, optional free time activities include kayaking, paddleboarding, canoeing, swimming, ropes course, rappelling off the catwalk, fishing, washer pitchin', sports activities and more! Scan the QR code here to learn more and register.

All Men's Ministry is a place for ALL men to walk in faith together. Have more questions about All Men's Ministry? Want to learn more? Visit fpcfw.org/men or contact Chris Bartley at 817.335.1231 ext. 252 or cbartley@fpcfw.org



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

SUNDAYS IN APRIL

- 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 APRIL

- 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 APRIL

- 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

MONDAY, APRIL 6

First Pres, Community Crossroads, and Early Education Center closed for Easter

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

- 3 p.m. Circles of Christ @ Jubilee Theatre

SUNDAY, APRIL 12

- 12 p.m. Honduras Solar Trip Lunch & Presentation

THURSDAY, APRIL 16

- 7 p.m. Penn Street Arts Concert: Dong-ill Shin, organist

SUNDAY, APRIL 19

- 3:30 p.m. Separating Fact from Fiction Immigration Conversation
- 4 p.m. Birds & Bees Conversation and Dinner

Be Inspired

Circles of Christ at Jubilee Theatre: April 11

Circles of Christ will meet at Jubilee Theatre (506 Main St, Fort Worth, TX 76102) to see: *Test to Testimony; Adaptation of God's Trombones* on Saturday, April 11 at 3 p.m. The cost is \$20 per person.

Test to Testimony is a powerful gospel musical adaptation inspired by James Weldon Johnson's classic work *God's Trombones*. This world premiere adaptation is written and directed by Jubilee Theatre's own D. Wambui Richardson. Rooted in the rich tradition of African American storytelling and the musical legacy of gospel, *Test to Testimony* transforms Johnson's timeless sermons into an unforgettable theatrical experience.



There are limited tickets available. Scan the QR code here to sign up today!

Birds and Bees Conversation & Dinner: April 19

Meghan Michelson with the Birds and Bees will lead a live program from 4-6 p.m. that encourages and equips parents to have age-appropriate conversations with their young children about sex. This presentation is for parents with preschoolers - 3rd grade. Childcare will be provided for children birth through five years old and volunteers will lead an activity for Kindergarteners - 3rd grade during the program. Following the program dinner will be provided for the whole family. Scan the QR code here to register.



Thursday Around the Table Potluck: April 23

Wellness Together invites you to join Thursday Around the Table, a relaxed and welcoming evening centered on good food, meaningful conversation, and fellowship with members of the First Pres community. This casual gathering offers a chance to connect, share a meal, and enjoy one another's company in an informal setting.



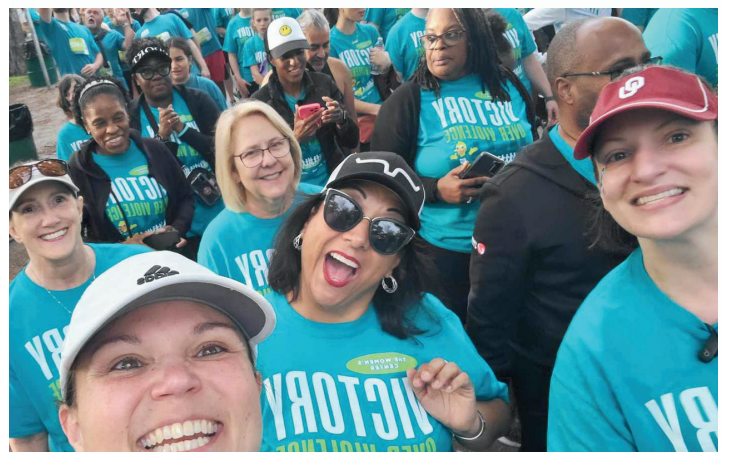
You're invited to a potluck dinner on Thursday, April 23, at 6 p.m. in the First Pres Atrium. Bring a favorite main dish and, if you'd like, a side, salad, or dessert. Drinks provided. Scan the QR code to RSVP.

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JOIN TEAM FIRST PRES



VICTORY OVER VIOLENCE: APRIL 18
RACE 2 REMEMBER THEM: MAY 9



GET MORE INFO AND REGISTER:
FPCFW.ORG/WELLNESS

Engage the World



A team of ten from First Pres recently returned from our third solar installation mission trip to Injerto, Honduras, where we shared both renewable energy and the love of God with our local partners. During the week, the team worked alongside community members to install solar power systems in ten homes, while leaving five additional systems to be completed by local residents in the coming weeks. The trip also included special time at the local school, helping a new teacher prepare her classroom, providing 30 much-needed chairs for the Injerto church, and hosting daytime craft activities for children while installations were underway.

Come learn about the recent trip at a Honduran Solar Trip Presentation on Sunday, April 12 in the Youth Center at noon. Hear about our team's experience and see photos of the life-changing power of solar energy and Christian love. Lunch will be served.



In February 2026, Community Crossroads:

- Provided **1,387** households with groceries
- Provided **304** individuals with clothing
- Served **693** sack lunches
- Provided pet food to **530** pet owners
- Provided **108** hygiene items to individuals
- Provided **109** cleaning products to individuals
- Provided **549** packages of diapers and **175** cans of formula to parents
- Served **39** dental patients
- A dedicated team of **195** volunteers contributed a remarkable total of **1,751** hours of service!

Save the Date! Habitat Presbyterian House Build is May 30



Mark your calendar for the annual Presbyterian House Build with Trinity Habitat for Humanity on Saturday, May 30, from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. We'll be back in the same neighborhood as last year at 4100 Joshua Springs Circle, Fort Worth. Volunteers will help raise and brace walls, and breakfast and snacks will be provided. To be a part of this meaningful morning of service, sign up at <https://vhub.at/1stpresbyterianchurch>.

Separating Fact From Fiction In the Immigration Conversation: April 19

Given the amount of disinformation and misinformation shared publicly about immigration, how should a Christian today discern what to believe or how to act? On Sunday, April 19, from 3:30–5:30 p.m., this workshop will provide an overview of immigration law and reflections on the current crisis from a pastor who has ministered on the ground in Dallas, Chicago, and Minneapolis. Scan the QR code here to register.



Rev. Mara Richards Bim is a pastor, writer, speaker and spiritual director. She currently serves as the first Justice & Advocacy Fellow in the newly-launched Prophetic Leadership Program at Royal Lane Baptist Church. Mara graduated from SMU's Perkins School of Theology in 2024 with a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction. After graduation, she served as the Program Director at Faith Commons. Mara was ordained to the Gospel Ministry by Royal Lane Baptist Church in 2025. Mara is a Clemons Fellow at Baptist News Global where she regularly writes about the intersection of religion and politics, focusing on the threats posed by Christian fascism. She serves on the Leadership Council of Texas Impact and is also an active volunteer with Christians Against Christian Nationalism. She is a sought-after speaker on the topics of religious freedom, Christian Nationalism, and immigration.

ALL CHURCH PICNIC

Sunday, May 3

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

Joys & Concerns

The following prayer concerns are those we have received as of March 25, 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 Eloise Elizabeth to parents Hannahbelle and **Harrison Parsons** born on January 26, 2026. She joins big brother Brooks. First Pres family members include grandparents **Thomas and Ashley Parsons**; uncle, **Michael Parsons**; and aunt, **Annie Parsons**.

Our loving sympathy to...

The family and friends of **Diane Hanley** following her death on March 21, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her husband, **Tom Hanley**, and children, **Fiske and Grace Hanley**.

The family and friends of **Ann Biggs** following her death on March 20, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her son and daughter-in-law **William and Jessica Biggs**, and grandchildren **Merrill, Wiliam**, and **Maxwell**; son, **Chris Biggs**, and her brother and sister-in-law, **Fred and Michelle Reynolds**.

The family and friends of **Carol Reed** following her death on March 19, 2026.

The family and friends of Stephen Anderson following his death on March 19, 2026. Surviving First Pres family member is his mother, **Marilyn Anderson**.

The family and friends of **Marjorie Gordon** following her death on February 28, 2026.

The family and friends of Lynn Marie Boudreau following her death on February 14, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her daughter

and son-in-law, **Valerie and Bob King**.

The family and friends of Joe Sudderth following his death on February 13, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include his son and daughter-in-law, **Mark and Margaret Sudderth**.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Dawn Shepard, 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'win Chochola, Nancy Lynn Scott, Gaylon Peyton, 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...

Seferino Sanchez (First Pres Staff), J Edgar Burlison (friend of **Anne Bryan**), Missy King (niece of **Bill and Barbara Holmes**), Silvia Perez (First Pres 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), 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.

Welcome, New Member!



Please join the Evangelism Work Group and UKirk TCU in welcoming **Kathrin "Kate" Peterson**, who joined First Pres on Sunday, March 1, 2026 by profession of faith and baptism. Kate is a nursing major.



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First Presbyterian Church

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Fort Worth, TX 76102

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WWW.FPCFW.ORG

A collage of three grayscale photographs showing people smiling and interacting. A horizontal purple-to-pink gradient bar is overlaid across the middle of the collage.

Easter

AT FIRST PRES FORT WORTH

Visit fpcfw.org/easter for more info