

THE Penn Street Letter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WORTH

MAY 2026 / VOLUME 26, NUMBER 5

First Pres Session Approves Building Remodel

After more than two years of careful study and design, Session approved a remodel of the Penn Street campus at its April meeting. The project focuses on addressing longstanding needs in the portion of the campus built in 1956, with a strong emphasis on accessibility, functionality, and creating more welcoming spaces for all who use the building.

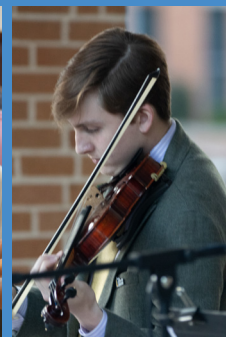
Key upgrades:

- Accessible parking spaces available on west side of Penn Street
- More welcoming entrances at the Office, Parlor, and Chapel
- Covered entrances at Office and Parlor
- Office entrance becomes ground level, with a wheelchair lift added inside for access to the second and third floors
- Early Education Center (EEC) gains a centralized reception area that is more welcoming
- EEC hallways get new flooring, wallcovering, and lighting
- Restrooms near the Chapel are redone and converted to single-user restrooms
- Third floor main reception area is reconfigured to provide more workspace
- Some administrative offices are reconfigured
- All offices get new carpet, paint, and lighting
- A larger employee breakroom with seating is created
- A conference room is added
- A Business Office Suite is added along the hallway to the north of the sanctuary
- Third floor hallways receive new tile, paint, and lighting
- New, accessible restrooms are created in the location of the current Bride's Room

Construction is anticipated to take approximately six months and is expected to begin early this summer. Session approved approximately \$5.3 million for the project, which represents a significant investment in improving accessibility, efficiency, and hospitality across the Penn Street campus.



EASTER AT FIRST PRES



Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,
"Never delay gratitude." It is a saying from the late basketball coach Skip Prosser, shared recently by Louisville's men's basketball coach,

Pat Kelsey (P.K.). In the interview, P.K. reminisced how his mentor, Coach Prosser, was known not just for how he coached the game, but for how he lived. He believed that gratitude was not a feeling to be waited on, but a discipline to be practiced. Say thank you now. Do not assume you will get another chance.

Here at First Pres, that feels especially fitting in a month like May. The end of the school year comes quickly. There are parties to attend, exams to finish, and transitions to navigate. It is easy to move from one thing to the next without stopping long enough to name what has mattered. But the church resists that

kind of hurry. We take time to give thanks. For our young people, who have led, questioned, served, and grown among us this year. For the ways God has been at work in them and through them, often in ways we did not fully see at the time.

At our annual Senior Dinner, we will pause and give thanks and name what God has done among us. Not because we have the right words, but because gratitude should not be delayed. And then, whether we are ready or not, Pentecost Sunday will arrive. The church's birthday. A reminder that the Spirit is still at work, still calling, still sending. So, we give thanks now. Not later.

Keep on keepin' on,

Rev. Dr. Josh Stewart
Associate Pastor - Youth

Submissions

Submissions for the next issue of the *Penn Street Letter* are due Wednesday, May 20. 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!



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@fpcf

April Session Highlights

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

- Examined and received the 2026 Confirmation Class into membership.
- Approved the list of First Pres Scholarship recipients for the 2026-2027 academic year.
- Received a report from Michelle Goodwin and Mike Turner on property renovations.
- Reviewed the Session Retreat.

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

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.



Penn Street Arts presents Ahreum Han Congdon in Concert, May 30

You're invited to an afternoon of organ music on Saturday, May 30, at 2 p.m. in the Sanctuary. First Presbyterian Church's own Director of Music and Organist, Ahreum Han Congdon, will present a dynamic program filled with exciting and expressive works.

Ahreum has appeared as a featured artist at renowned venues around the world, including the International Organ Festival in Arbon, Switzerland; Jack Singer Hall in Calgary; Michaelskirche in Leipzig; Oxford Town Hall; Nottingham Albert Concert Hall; and Esplanade Hall in Singapore.

She has earned top prizes from numerous competitions, including the Oundle Award (UK), the Westminster Choir College Scholarship Competition (undergraduate division), the Charlotte Hoyt Bagnall Scholarship Competition, the MTNA National Young Artist Performance Competition, the Albert Schweitzer Organ Competition, and the Edwin Seder Prize at Yale's Institute of Sacred Music. Her performances have also been featured on *Pipedreams*, produced by American Public Media.

Born in Seoul, Korea, Ahreum immigrated with her family to Atlanta at age sixteen. She holds degrees from Westminster Choir College, the Curtis Institute of Music, Yale School of Music and Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and the University of Iowa. Her teachers include Ed Dunbar, Ken Cowan, Alan Morrison, Thomas Murray, and Brett Wolgast.

This concert is free and open to the public.



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

MAY SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

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

Starla Adams-Jones, Lead Teacher (Infants), 9 years

Ashley Drake Mertz, Parish Associate, Pastoral Care, 3 years

Norbert Jankovich, Chef de Cuisine, 7 years

Matt McGraw, Parish Visitor, 4 years



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

SUNDAYS IN MAY

- 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

MONDAYS IN MAY

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

WEDNESDAYS IN MAY

- 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

FRIDAY, MAY 1 THROUGH SUNDAY, MAY 3

Mo-Ranch Men's Conference

SATURDAY, MAY 2

- 9 a.m. Preschool Family Meet-Up; Playdate in the Park

SUNDAY, MAY 3

- 11 a.m. All Church Picnic & Blood Drive
- 12 p.m. Conversation with Dr. Joey King
- 4 p.m. Youth Field Day End of Year Party

TUESDAY, MAY 5

- 7 p.m. MOMS & Friends End of Year Celebration

SATURDAY, MAY 9

- 8 a.m. Race to Remember Them

SUNDAY, MAY 17

- 12:15 p.m. Children's End of Year Party
- 6 p.m. Senior Dinner

SATURDAY, MAY 23

All Men's Ministry Rucksack Hike

MONDAY, MAY 25

First Pres, Early Education Center, & Community Crossroads closed for Memorial Day

SATURDAY, MAY 30

- 7 a.m. Habitat Presbyterian House Build
- 2 p.m. Penn Street Arts Concert: Ahreum Han Congdon

Be Inspired

Faith Seminar for Parents of Youth: Sunday, May 31

This seminar for parents of youth (grades 6-12) will explore the unique developmental and faith formation journeys of youth as they seek to embrace, articulate, and practice their Christian faith. Using works by James Fowler (*Stages of Faith*) and Stephen Jones (*Faith Shaping: Youth and the Experience of Faith*), the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski will engage parents in exploring and understanding this simultaneously exciting and unsettling season of parenting as it relates to faith. What are unique issues, challenges, and opportunities during this time of life? What are good practices for parents? How does the First Pres faith community offer support and encouragement for parents?



This seminar is on Sunday, May 31 from 5:30-7 p.m. in Room 238 with dinner included. Scan the QR code here to register.



You're invited to First Pres' Annual All-Church Labor Day Weekend Retreat at Mo-Ranch, September 4-7, 2026, in the beautiful Texas Hill Country! This year's theme, "Slow Mo," invites us to embrace the present moment and experience the joy of connection with others and God. Register by June 1 with a 50% deposit to save your spot (balance due August 1). Come be part of this special weekend! Scan the QR code here to sign up today!



All Church Picnic & Blood Drive: Sunday, May 3

You're invited to a meaningful morning of worship followed by a delicious lunch and an afternoon of family-friendly fun at the annual All Church Picnic! Enjoy treats from the ice cream truck, smiles from Billy Buttons, balloon artistry, face painting, and even a blood drive. Scan the QR code to schedule your blood drive appointment and come ready for a joyful day together.



Conversation with Dr. Joey King: Sunday, May 3

On Sunday, May 3 at 12 p.m., you're invited to a conversation and lunch with Dr. Joey King, President of Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingville, Texas, in Room 304. Dr. King will share how faith-filled education is shaping curious minds, courageous leaders, and resilient spirits through the power of community. Come enjoy lunch and an inspiring mid-day conversation you won't want to miss. Scan the QR code here to register.



Race 2 Remember Them: May 9

Join Team First Pres at the Race 2 Remember Them benefiting The WARM Place on Saturday, May 9, 2026. This special morning brings our community together to honor and remember our loved ones we have lost through a meaningful 5K timed race, a 1-mile fun run/walk, and family-friendly activities in the Kid Zone. When registering, you will be asked if you'd like to join an existing team - simply search for "First Presbyterian Church Fort Worth." Scan the QR code here to register.



Faith Seminar for Parents of Adult Children: Wednesday, June 3

This seminar is for parents of adult children who do not participate in the life of a faith community. During the seminar, the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski will engage parents in exploring how to create an inviting space for conversation, understanding, and support for their adult children. Building on James Fowler's *Stages of Faith*, participants will gain a deeper insight into the opportunities and challenges adults face in faith formation.

This seminar is on Wednesday, June 3 from 12-1:30 p.m. in Room 238 with lunch included. Scan the QR code here to register.



Engage the World



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 (note: this is a brand new neighborhood and street may not show up on GPS, but neighborhood is across from Mary Harris Elementary School in south Fort Worth). Volunteers will help raise and brace walls, and breakfast and snacks will be provided. Sign up at <https://vhub.at/1stpresbyterianchurch>.

We also need a sponsor to provide breakfast on Saturday May 30 for 30 people to be delivered to the worksite (breakfast tacos are always a hit!). Contact Robyn Michalove (robymn@fpcf.w.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 266) for more info.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT WORTH

Community Crossroads

In March 2026, Community Crossroads:

- Provided **1,359** households with groceries
- Provided **313** individuals with clothing
- Served **705** sack lunches
- Provided pet food to **418** pet owners
- Provided **141** hygiene items to individuals
- Provided **146** cleaning products to individuals
- Provided **682** packages of diapers and **203** cans of formula to parents
- A dedicated team of **214** volunteers contributed a remarkable total of **1,794** hours of service!



On Friday, April 17, we honored our many dedicated Community Crossroads volunteers with a celebratory lunch. Thank you for all you do!



Spring into Action: Calling ALL Men in May!

Men of all ages are invited to spring into action this May with two opportunities for fellowship, faith, and the outdoors.

First, make plans to attend the Mo-Ranch Men's Conference, May 1-3, 2026, along the banks of the Guadalupe River in the Texas Hill Country. Enjoy a God-filled weekend of worship, learning, and connection, featuring keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Brian Coulter.

Then enjoy a Rucksack Hike at the Fort Worth Nature Center on Saturday, May 23. We'll meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Nature Center (9601 Fossil Ridge Rd, Fort Worth). Rucksacks are optional and a boardwalk trail will be available for those with mobility concerns. Long pants, closed-toe shoes, bug spray, sunscreen, and water are recommended.

Don't miss these chances to grow in faith and community - visit fpcfw.org/men or scan the QR code to learn more.



Celebrate our Graduating Seniors!

Graduating high school seniors and parents - let's celebrate this exciting milestone! First Pres is honoring our seniors with a special Senior Celebration Dinner on May 17 at 6 p.m. in the Youth Center. Submitted achievements and photos will also be featured in upcoming issues of *The Penn Street Letter* and *Penn Street Online* making this moment even more meaningful. If you are a graduating senior or family member who would like to attend the dinner or submit your senior's info for publication, reach out to Becky (bquick@fpcfw.org) or Josh (josh@fpcfw.org).

We're also inviting the church to join the celebration by signing up to sponsor a senior with a small, thoughtful basket of helpful items as they begin their next chapter. Small groups or church school classes are welcome to go in together to sponsor a senior. Scan the QR code here to sign up to provide a basket and show your support!



Welcome, New Members!

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



Paul Amaru and **Scott Goodwin** joined First Pres on Sunday, April 12 by transfer of membership from Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church in Duluth, GA. Paul and Scott recently relocated to Fort Worth. Scott is the brother of First Pres member Bill Goodwin.



Edgar Burlison joined First Pres on Sunday, April 12 by reaffirmation of faith. He is friends with several First Pres members and has been visiting 11 a.m. worship for several months. Edgar is retired from the security business.



Erica Moyo joined First Pres on Easter Sunday, April 5 by transfer from St. Philip Presbyterian Church in Hurst. Erica is a junior at Austin College. She is the daughter of First Pres member Mable Kapyepye.



2026 Confirmation Class students **Jack Edwards, Charlotte Evans, Savannah Freeman, Karter Frohlich, Annika Gibbs, Laura McElhany, Charlotte McPherson, Finley Smick,** and **Lilah Smith** passed their Session examination on Youth Sunday, April 19. We look forward to confirming them in worship on Sunday, May 3, during the 9 a.m. service.

Women of First Pres: Save these Dates!

ALL CHURCH LADIES EVENING TEA
TUESDAY, MAY 19 | 5:30 P.M. | GREAT HALL

All women are invited to enjoy a relaxed evening of conversation, food, fellowship, and tea on Tuesday, May 19, from 5:30-7 p.m. We'll also install officers.

SUMMER TREAT FIESTA
THURSDAY, JUNE 4 | 5:30 P.M. | BLUE MESA

Start the summer with a fiesta at Blue Mesa Grill (612 Carroll St., Fort Worth) on Thursday, June 4 at 5:30 p.m. Fun, food, fellowship! Dinner is \$30 (paid in advance) and includes chips & salsas, southwest caesar salad, enchiladas (blue corn cheese enchilada with chile red sauce, bbq brisket rajitas enchiladas with queso blanco, corn relish, and drizzle of bbq sauce), smoky black beans, coconut lime rice, and sweet corn cake. Included drinks are water and passion fruit tea. Cash bar available (cold drinks \$3.50, margaritas \$9.50). You must pre-register and pay in advance.

MO-RANCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
JUNE 5-7 | MO-RANCH

A meaningful weekend of worship and renewal featuring keynote speaker Rev. Sarah Speed.

TUESDAY TOGETHER
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25 | 10 A.M. | GREAT HALL

Welcome guest speaker Dr. Sarah Leer as she presents "United through Christ, Bound to Each Other." Lunch is \$15.

For more details or to make reservations for any of these events, contact Deneice Allen in the church office (817.335.1231 or dallen@fpcfw.org) or visit fpcfw.org/pw.

Joys & Concerns

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

Our loving sympathy to...

The family and friends of **Joyce Brower** following her death on April 20, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her daughter **Paula Brower**.

The family and friends of **John Alt** following his death on April 20, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include his sons, **Greg and Michael Alt**.

The family and friends of **Evelyn Hill** following her death on April 19, 2026.

The family and friends of **Wanda Williams** following her death in August 2025.

The family and friends of Rebecca Montoya following her death on April 13, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include her daughter and son-in-law, **Cheryl and Joe Mireles**.

The family and friends of Jack Callaway following his death on April 10, 2026. Surviving First Pres family members include his daughter and son-in-law, **Diane and Tommy Duniven**.

The family and friends of **Richard (Dick) Coffey** following his death on April 5, 2026.

The family and friends of **Mollie Lasater** following her death on March 29, 2026. Surviving First Pres family member includes her husband, Garland Lasater.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Edgar Burlison, 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'lwin 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.

Jean Lyons, 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...

Verne Hargrave, father of Blake Hargrave (First Pres staff), Seferino Sanchez (First Pres staff), Missy King (niece of **Bill and Barbara Holmes**),

Silvia Perez (First Pres staff), 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.

Get Your Personalized First Pres Name Tag Today!

We're excited to offer permanent name tags featuring the First Pres logo, available for purchase. Choose between a plastic pin-type or a magnetic back. Ordering is easy - just visit our vendor's website by scanning the QR code here.

The Evangelism Work Group will continue to provide adhesive name tag stickers on Name Tag Sunday, the third Sunday of each month. Plus, if you serve as an usher or greeter, you'll receive a permanent name tag at no charge. Don't miss out on this opportunity to proudly wear your name and connect with our church community!



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**HIDDEN IN
PLAIN SIGHT**
✚ First Pres Youth

*Youth Sunday, April 19,
helped us notice what is
often “Hidden in Plain
Sight,” the steady faith,
growing courage, and
real leadership of our
young people.*

*As they led us in worship,
they showed us again
that God is already
at work in them and
through them, calling all
of us to pay attention
and join in Christ’s
ministry to the world.*