

THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

JANUARY 2021 | Volume 21, Number 1



PARKING LOT WORSHIP CONTINUES ON PENN STREET

Parking Lot Worship at the Penn Street Campus will resume on Sunday, January 3 and continue through January, weather permitting. *(Services will not meet if raining or other inclement weather.)*

Parking Lot services use radio station 99.9 FM, so that those attending remain in their cars, parked in the two lots directly across from the Sanctuary. Worship leaders are visible from the plaza in front of the Sanctuary. Services last from 30-40 minutes and include scripture, prayers, preaching, and hymns sung safely while remaining in vehicles *(Note: since cars will be parked within 6 feet of each other, masks must be worn if windows are lowered during the service.)* Bulletins are available at fpcfw.org/worship or paper copies are available from greeters in the parking lot. Advance registration is not required, however, those attending agree to remain in their vehicles for the duration of the service as we exercise the maximum in care and concern for the health of one another.

Online worship services continue to be offered at 10 a.m. Sundays on Facebook Live and YouTube. Visit fpcfw.org/worship for more information and links.



PW HONORS ROBYN MICHALOVE ON HER DOCTORATE

Presbyterian Women recently presented Robyn Michalove with the gift of her robe and academic hood in honor of her graduation from the Doctor of Ministry program at Brite Divinity School.

Martha Cunningham, Moderator of Presbyterian Women at FPC, says, "We are so proud of our Pastor Robyn! In 2019 we awarded her our organization's pin as an Honorary Lifetime Member. So of course when she was going to earn her doctorate degree we were eager to honor her with a donation to purchase her new robe and hood. We announced our intent at our Circle meetings in early November and the individual donations poured in. I am thankful to past Moderators Barbara Reece and Sally Parmelee for reminding me of this PW tradition of giving that began with our Associate Pastor Michael and continued with Josh and now Robyn. Also big thanks to our treasurer, Mary Susan Farrar, who received and handled all the contributions. Congratulations Dr. Robyn!"



PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

It is natural at the beginning of a new year to spend time reflecting on the past year and anticipating what lies ahead. That is certainly true as we leave 2020 and enter into 2021. What a journey we have been on and continue on in faithfulness. This past year we have endured a once in a century pandemic. We have come through one of the most divided and polarizing elections in memory. We have struggled in deeper, more intense ways with issues of justice in our society. We have had to learn how to be the church in new and creative ways in order to remain connected when we can't be physically gathered. 2020 was a year of challenge on so many levels –all at once.

2020 was also a year of experiencing *God's Continued Blessings* as First Presbyterian Church. 40 new members joined the congregation, over 30 of them DURING the time we have been worshipping virtually. The Community Crossroads expansion is nearly complete. New ministries of food and hospitality were birthed at Community Crossroads to meet the increased needs in our community. New staff began their ministries at the church. New elders were called and elected by the congregation to begin serving in January. Countless thousands upon thousands of acts of compassion and care have been extended in ways known and unknown as we have continued to serve Jesus in our congregation and community.

2021 is a year of great excitement and anticipation as we prepare to call a new Pastor/ Head of Staff. As access to vaccines begin to expand, we look forward to the day in the not so far off future when we will be able to gather together in person safely for joyful worship, service, nurture, and fellowship. Ministries at Community Crossroads will live into the new and renovated space with extra energy and expanded reach into the community. God will continue deepening our faith - individually and as a congregation. There is much to celebrate in these next months!

As we begin a new year, I hope you will find time to be intentional in your personal reflections on 2020 and your anticipation of 2021 – especially as it relates to your life of faith and how God may be calling to you as you live out your discipleship. Through scripture, devotional readings, prayers, and conversations, I pray a deep and meaningful time of reflection for you. Please know your pastors are here to reflect with you if you would like to talk.

My own reflection in these next weeks will be guided by the text of a hymn I have been contemplating recently. Perhaps the hymn text will inspire your reflection as well. The hymn is *Faith Begins by Letting Go*, by Carl P. Daw, Jr.

Faith begins by letting go, giving up what had seemed sure, taking risks and pressing on, though the way feels less secure: pilgrimage both right and odd, trusting all our life to God.

Faith endures by holding on, keeping memory's roots alive so that hope may bear its fruit; promise-fed, our souls will thrive, not through merit we possess but by God's great faithfulness.

Faith matures by reaching out, stretching minds, enlarging hearts, sharing struggles, living prayer, binding up the broken parts; till we find the common place ripe with witness to God's grace.

God's peace to you,

Michael

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the FEBRUARY issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, JANUARY 20**. Submissions for the weekly Penn Street Online emailed newsletters are due the Wednesday prior to each week's issue. Please send to Pam Burkholder at pamb@pcfw.org.

FOLLOW US

Do you follow First Presbyterian on social media? If not, find us on the following sites and follow along for photos, reminders, encouragement, and more.



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Read the Bible in 9 Months

You are invited to join an exciting Bible reading program at First Presbyterian. Now in its tenth season, Reading the Bible in 9 Months is a daily reading program that weaves together both testaments in an enlightening and enriching experience of our history as God's people.

A feature of Reading the Bible in 9 Months includes the opportunity for monthly Zoom meetings from October – May. During these one hour gatherings (3 p.m. on the 1st Sunday of the month), participants are invited to come together for support, encouragement, and to engage questions that the readings have raised. Engaging in the reading program does not require attendance at the monthly meetings; they are simply available if you would find them helpful.

The complete reading plan is available at fpcf.org/rb9m. If you have any questions about the program or Bible study opportunities at FPC, contact the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski (817.335.1231 ext. 229, or michaelw@fpcf.org).

January 1: Acts 7,8
January 2: Acts 9-11
January 3: Acts 12-14
January 4: Acts 15-17
January 5: Acts 18-20
January 6: Acts 21-24
January 7: Acts 25-28
January 8: Romans 1-5
January 9: Romans 6-11
January 10: Romans 12-16
January 11: 1 Corinthians 1-8
January 12: 1 Corinthians 9-14
January 13: 1 Cor. 15 – 2 Cor. 3
January 14: 2 Corinthians 4-7
January 15: 2 Corinthians 8-13
January 16: Galatians
January 17: Ephesians
January 18: Philippians, Colossians
January 19: 1 and 2 Thessalonians
January 20: 1 and 2 Timothy
January 21: Titus, Philemon
January 22: Deuteronomy 1-4
January 23: Deuteronomy 5-7
January 24: Deuteronomy 8-11
January 25: Deuteronomy 12-14
January 26: Deuteronomy 15-17
January 27: Deuteronomy 18-20
January 28: Deuteronomy 21-23
January 29: Deuteronomy 24-26
January 30: Deuteronomy 27-29
January 31: Deuteronomy 30-34

Welcome, New Members!

Please join the Evangelism Committee in welcoming these new members:



Cindy Boyd joined by transfer of membership from Arborlawn United Methodist Church on Tuesday, December 15.



Tom Dieb joined by Reaffirmation of Faith on Tuesday, December 15. Tom sang in FPC's Chancel Choir prior to the pandemic.

DON'T FORGET TO SIGN IN DURING WORSHIP

Please remember to register your presence in worship each Sunday using the "Online Worshipers, Click Here" button on fpcf.org/worship. Think of this as the same as entering your information in a blue Ritual of Friendship pad during in-person worship. It is important to the ministries of FPC to know who is worshiping with us, especially during the time when we cannot be together in person.

BE INSPIRED...

Below are some upcoming opportunities for being inspired into a life of discipleship through church events in the coming weeks.

New Bible In Depth Study Begins January 3

Sunday, January 3, at 4.30 p.m., a new Bible in Depth study of the book of Romans will begin via Zoom. Romans is widely considered to be the masterpiece of the apostle Paul's writing. One commentator says that, "It dwarfs most of his other writings, an Alpine peak towering over hills and villages. Not all onlookers have viewed it in the same light or from the same angle, and their snapshots and paintings of it are sometimes remarkably unlike. Not all climbers have taken the same route up its sheer sides, and there is frequent disagreement on the best approach. What nobody doubts is that we are here dealing with a work of massive substance, presenting a formidable intellectual challenge while offering a breath-taking theological and spiritual vision." (N.T. Wright in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Volume X, Abingdon Press, 2002. p. 395)

Led by the Rev Dr. Michael Waschevski, this verse by verse study of Romans will be one that both inspires and informs our Christian discipleship. To register for the course, visit fpcf.org/adulted or call Celeste in the church office (817.335.1231 ext. 261). The Zoom link will be sent prior to the first meeting in January 3.



WORSHIP HANDBELLS ARTS MUSIC

Spring 2021 Classes

Chimes: January 10 – February 7.

Learn to play handchimes in this virtual class taught by Rebecca Sawyer. We will spend 4 weeks learning to play in zoom class and the 5th week, we'll each record ourselves and submit the video for a virtual bell piece. A tub with music and 1 or 2 sanitized handchimes will be delivered to your house prior to class. For more information or to register, please contact Rebecca Sawyer, rsawyer@fpcf.org.

Ukulele II: February 14 – March 7.

For those who attended the Fall Ukulele class, here is your opportunity to take your skills to a new level! Laura Collins will teach this class, where you will learn some more advanced chords and add many songs to your repertoire. For more information or to register, please contact Rebecca Sawyer, rsawyer@fpcf.org.

Watch for Art and Orff events/classes to be added to our Spring schedule soon!

Spiritual Formation **UPCOMING COURSE OFFERINGS**

FPC's Spiritual Formation Subcommittee is pleased to offer several Zoom-based educational opportunities. Visit fpcf.org/spiritualformation for more information or to register for these classes. You may also contact the church office (817.335.1231) with questions or to register by phone.

COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY:

Sundays, January 3 through February 14, 11 a.m.

The spiritual journey into the heart of God has many signposts along the way and many fellow travelers who have lighted the path for those who follow. In this class we will meet several individuals who have been influential teachers throughout the centuries. By listening to the voices from this Great Cloud of Witnesses and learning something of their lives with God, we can find mentors for deepening our own relationship with the Holy and gain insight into the rich history of spiritual disciples in the Christian tradition.

This course will resume meeting by Zoom at 11 a.m. on Sundays, January 3 - February 14. It will be facilitated by a team from the Spiritual Formation Subcommittee.

SHALOM:

Sundays, January 10 - February 21, 1 p.m.

Desmond Tutu has written a book, *God Has a Dream*. And in it, he echoes MLK, saying, "God says to you, 'I have a dream. Please help me to realize it. It is a dream of a world whose ugliness and squalor and poverty, its war and hostility, its greed and harsh competitiveness, its alienation and disharmony are changed into their glorious counterparts. When there will be more laughter, joy, and peace, where there will be justice and goodness and compassion and love and caring and sharing. I have a dream that my children will know that they are members of one family, the human family, God's family, my family.'"

These great men did not make this stuff up. Instead they took a comprehensive look at scripture and recognized that God's vision of how we were to live with one another and with God permeates all of scripture. And they understood that God was serious about birthing this dream into reality. MLK called the dream, "the beloved community;" Desmond Tutu, "Ubuntu." The Old Testament calls it "Shalom;" the New Testament, "Eirene."

In this 6-week course, Carol Toombs will trace God's dream of shalom as it was introduced in Genesis and fulfilled in Revelation, exploring the richness of shalom blessings and the urgency of human responsibility in co-creating it. The course will explore how, through covenants, law, prophets, Jesus Christ, and the early church, God's dream was both kept alive and revealed in ever greater depth.

ENGAGE THE WORLD...

Below are a few ways we engage with others through church events and outreach opportunities in recent weeks.



Community Crossroads Outreach Center continues to pick up donations from Tom Thumb on West 7th Street, Natural Grocers on West 7th Street, and Walmart Marketplace on Berry Street. If you shop at any of these locations, please take a moment to thank them for their generous support of this ministry.

In addition to grocery distribution, (since October 28), Community Crossroads has distributed 46 winter coats, 162 Thanksgiving turkeys and baskets, and countless masks. Heath and Norbert made a fabulous Thanksgiving feast that was distributed for lunch the day before Thanksgiving to 195 neighbors.

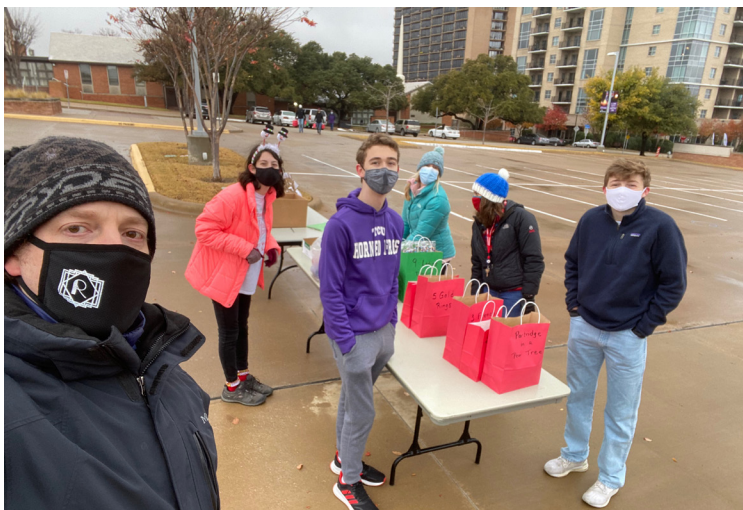
For Christmas, Heath and Norbert planned a Christmas feast for 200, which was distributed on Wednesday night, December 23. Along with the Christmas Feast, Community Crossroads Outreach Center distributed 200 Christmas Bags to neighbors containing hats, hand lotion, pocket calendars, pens, lip balm, candy, candy canes, hand warmers, gloves, and hand sanitizer. Special thanks to all who assembled and donated Christmas Bags, including the Aziere Family, the Fulcom Family, Bret Gilley, Brandon Mountjoy, the Schmid Family, Carol and Randy Toombs, Cigna, and Oak Street Health. Community Crossroads wishes to thank everyone who has contributed, no matter how large or how small, to helping our neighbors know they are remembered and cared for during this turbulent holiday season.

If you are ready to return to active ministry, Community Crossroads has a place for you! Crossroads screens all volunteers, and all volunteers continue to wear masks and physically distance in an effort to keep everyone safe. If you are interested in learning more about this vital ministry, contact Dori Al-Hammami, Director of Community Crossroads Outreach Center, 817.921.3955 or dalhammami@fpcfww.org.



STAYING CONNECTED

From a Party for the Blind Youth Call-a-Thon to an Advent Celebration in the parking lot and PW Circle meetings, pictured here are some of the recent ways the FPC family has been staying connected to the church and one another. If you have photos of an FPC event or gathering that you'd like to see included here, email them to Pam Burkholder, Communications Coordinator, at pamb@fpcfww.org.



JOYS & CONCERNS

Following are the joys and concerns shared as December 17, 2020. To respect the privacy of those listed, names are included only when the individuals grant their permission.

Our loving sympathy to...

Chris and Rebekka Garcia on the death of his father, Chris Garcia on November 18 in San Antonio. Other survivors include **Benjamin Garcia**, **Katherine Garcia**, and **Lorraine Garcia**.

Family and friends of **Anna Lee Swan**, who died November 24. She is survived by FPC family **Melinda Lary-Smith and William Smith**, John Paul and **Amanda Chidgey**, **Lee Ann and Brian O'Loughlin**, **John-Luke Chidgey**, and **Tex Chidgey**.

Taleesa Van Tassel on the death of her brother-in-law, Jack Kenny on November 25 in Arlington.

Family and friends of **Dorothy Keeton**, who died November 29.

Linda Northern on the death of her mother-in-law, Betty Skillern, on November 30.

Friends and family of **Carol McCarty**, who died on December 1. Surviving FPC family includes **Sylvia and Tom Macomber**.

Cara and Austin Sanders on the death of her grandmother, Hazel Manley, on December 4 in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Other FPC survivors are grandchildren **Bethany Sanders**, Jude Sanders, Olivia Sanders, and Liam Sanders.

Friends and family of **Floyd Kinser**, who died on December 6. Surviving FPC family includes **Dorothy Kinser**, **Glen Kinser**, **Judith and Kevin Kinser**, **Shea Kinser** and **Austin Powell**, and **Owen Kinser**.

Todd and Kasha Vick on the death of his father, Joe Vick, on December 7 in Rosemount, Minnesota.

Tracie and Fritz Stewart on the death of her mother, Bettie Arnold, on December 8. Other FPC survivors are grandchildren **Brazos Stewart** and **Meridian Stewart**.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Marjorie Gordon, **Mike Millar**, **Susie Kuipers**, **Sarah Graham**, **Julie Carter**, and **Mary Jane Witt**, who are recovering from surgery or injury.

Joel Salazar, **Jimmy Burnett**, **Claire Midkiff**, **Jim Goble**, **Barbara Reece**, **Karl Kuipers**, **Dorothy Kinser**, **Diane Satterlee**, **Jerry Brownlee**, **Eliot Kerlin**, **Joyce Brower**, **Janelle Eklund**, **Frank Stewart**, **Karl Travis**, **Rush Hart**, **Marilyn Wilson**, **Phyllis Propes**, **Emma Coley**, and **Frances Blake**, who are dealing with illness or undergoing treatment.

Our caring prayers for extended family include...

Sharie Kenny (sister of **Taleesa Van Tassel**), **Rosalyn Blackmon** (niece of **Taleesa Van Tassel**), **Cora McCoy** (mother-in-law of **Lesley McCoy**), **Paula Perkins** (sister of **Susie Kuipers**), **Audrey Hart** (great-granddaughter of **Bob and Jane Trask**), **Ann Welch** (sister of **Andrea Frankenfield**), **Mike Bryan** (son-in-law of **Mary Alice Dobesh**), **Nancy Hatfield** (mother of **Sarah Haddock**), **Patrick Denton** (nephew of **Bill and Pat Gordon**), **Lynn Prater** (daughter of

Harlene Satterfield); **Bill Neil** (brother of **Marilyn Love**), **Janet Laminack** (cousin of **Julie Sphar** and **Vance Laminack**), **John DeMore** (son-in-law of **June Sprott**), **Kathy Kline** (**Maxine Kruse's** daughter), and **Susan Chenault** (**Frances Chenault's** daughter).

Prayers for peace in our world, for the safety of **Nathan Gunter** (**Russell and Vivian Norment's** nephew) who is stationed in Korea. Also for the safety of **Diego A. Saldivar**, who is serving in the US Navy; **Diego** is the son of **Becky and Rene Saldivar**. Also for the safety of **Thomas Shelby**, who is serving in the US Navy, deployed in Japan. **Thomas** is the son of **Ellen Buck** and the grandson of **Vance and Donna Laminack**. Also for the safety of **Cullen Cline** (grandson of **Bill and Glinda King**), who is serving in the US Navy.

Prayers for those affected by the coronavirus pandemic including medical professionals and healthcare providers.

Prayers for **Cindy Corell**, our mission co-worker in Haiti. Prayers for peace and resolution for the people of Haiti.

Our congratulations and best wishes to...

Alex and Tom Davis on the birth of **Thomas Garet** on November 25. **Thomas** joins big brother **J. Fred** and big sister **Eleanor**. Proud FPC grandparents are **Rob and Pam Davis**.

Shea Kinser and **Austin Powell**, who were married on November 28 in Washington, D.C.

Prayer During the Pastoral Search

The Session commends the following prayer written by the Spiritual Formation Subcommittee for our use during the pastoral search. Please pray it frequently in your own personal prayer time and in committees and virtual gatherings of the church.

Holy God,

We praise and thank you for your steadfast love of our church and humbly ask your guidance and blessing as you lead us to the pastor you are calling to this place.

Nurture and guide your servant for sharing ministry among us. Prepare our hearts to receive his or her gifts.

Give us the courage to speak truthfully and compassionately, so that we might be a building up of Your church. Teach us all the way of Jesus: to walk humbly with you, seeking justice and mercy.

Joyfully, we thank you for your Holy Spirit who enlightens and enlivens the path for each of us.

In Christ's name we pray, Amen.



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PERIODICALS
POSTMASTER:

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WWW.FPCFW.ORG



Drive By Event

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10

BENEFITING NEIGHBORS IN NEED

Please come to the FPC Penn Street campus on Sunday, January 10 from 12:30 to 2 p.m. for a drive-by event at the FPC Great Hall Porch. This is an opportunity for you to donate clothing items for Community Crossroads and other local agencies serving our neighbors. Members of the Evangelism Committee will be on hand to greet you and collect your donations. Items needed:

- Underwear
- Socks
- Gloves
- Hats
- Scarves
- Earmuffs

All adult sizes are needed, both women's and men's, to help keep our neighbors warm and dry during the winter months. Please limit donations to new items only.

Thank you in advance for your help with this important ministry. Please contact the church office at 817.335.1231 with any questions in the meantime. We look forward to seeing you!