

# THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

MAY 2020 | Volume 20, Number 5

## STAYING CONNECTED



### ONLINE WORSHIP

First Presbyterian's online worship services have been well attended by members, friends, and mission partners locally, nationally, and internationally!

Pre-COVID-19 worship attendance on a typical Sunday ranged from 500-700 per week. Holy Week Midday Prayer services ranged from 40-60. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services 300-400.

Here are worship statistics (estimated total viewers) from our online services beginning March 22:

- March 22: 1,036
- March 29: 1,254
- April 5 (Palm Sunday): 1,236
- Holy Monday Midday Prayer: 304
- Holy Tuesday Midday Prayer: 316
- Holy Wednesday Midday Prayer: 358
- Maundy Thursday: 534
- Good Friday Tenebrae: 492
- Easter Sunday (Sunrise and 10 a.m.): 1,620

You're invited to participate in online worship on Sundays at 10 a.m. while we are unable to gather in person. These services include prayers, scripture, reflections, and music. Full details and directions for joining the 10 a.m. worship experience are posted on our website ([fpcfww.org/digitalworship](http://fpcfww.org/digitalworship)), on Facebook ([facebook.com/firstpresfw](https://facebook.com/firstpresfw)), and in our weekly worship email.

While we remain physically separated, we are well-connected as we worship online! Thanks be to God.

### IN THIS ISSUE...

we explore some of the many ways FPC is staying connected during this time.



# PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

On Sunday morning, March 15, our morning worship was postponed for the first time due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was a strange day to say the least. I woke up and had the uneasy feeling all morning that I was super late or had forgotten to do something important. Routines are funny that way when they are broken,

aren't they? Well, as I was reading books in preparation for the twin's afternoon nap (something I rarely get to do on Sundays), our young-bossy-theologian daughter said something fascinating. She was fighting naptime, struggling to calm down on this odd day. My inept fatherly tactics were not working. After calmly putting on her blanket, she threw it off violently! After whispering to her to try closing her eyes with me for a minute, she screamed and thrashed! (Mind you, her brother, Shep, is fast asleep at this point -- classic twin behavior!) Then, with furrowed eyebrows and warm crocodile tears, Sippi finally proclaimed her frustration and put her feelings into words, "Daddy," she howled, "how can I close my eyes when my brain is so excited?!"

Immediately, I thought of my old friend, David Bailey (the late Presbyterian hippie-folk singer). "Life is short, stay awake," he sings in one of his songs (this is Sippi's theme song!). David was a 14-year survivor of an aggressive brain tumor that doctors predicted would give him 6 months to live. Tragically, David died almost 10 years ago -- nevertheless, his story of survival and hope remains powerful and relevant, and his songs continue to inspire me. After his bleak diagnosis, David made a change in his life. He quit his job, picked up his guitar, and started writing songs. He first formed a band called "Not By Chance" before choosing to go solo, creating over 20 albums. His legacy reminds me that when you feel hopeless and overwhelmed, God is right there with you in the midst of it. Reminds me that no matter how dark it gets or how strong the storm, there is always hope. Reminds me that we are all called to embrace the faith of NOT a spiritual giant, NOT of a pillar of academic excellence, NOT a well-seasoned ordained minister...no, Jesus teaches that we are to embrace the faith of a child. What does the faith of a child look like? Better not ask me, you really should ask Sippi. Ask the children who aren't afraid to sing their own songs, create pieces of art, imagine new worlds and possibilities, shed tears in disappointment, scream in frustration, slow down to notice something simple, and treasure every small acorn or rock that they find along the way. There's something important and vital in our Christian belief system that is intricately connected to a childlike faith, a faith that trusts our heavenly parent is with us, knows what we need, and is by our side and ready to pick us up when we fall.

I'm still working on it, of course, and I'm thankful to be in an encouraging faith community that is working on it too. As we all try to take this "physical distancing" thing one day at a time and as we discover new ways to connect and worship together, let us also remember and take heart that through Christ, each new day still has meaning and purpose. As David Bailey sings:

*This could be the day you've waited for so long  
when it finally comes together like the last verse of a song  
This could be the day that's been waiting for you  
When it all starts to make sense and the old feels like it's new  
This could be the day that comes on a prayer and a wing  
It will only happen once who knows what it will bring*

Keep on keeping on,

P.S. Here's a handful of David's songs that are free to listen to on YouTube (there are plenty more out there on the web), if you're interested, visit the links below:

- Live Forever: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhtHtURCIfs&pbjreload=10>
- This Could Be Your Day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxOwZ6psYE0>
- One More Day: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDJJ20\\_nABl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDJJ20_nABl)
- What: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkigluNXoro>
- Java Junkie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmcpEmkscjY>

## SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the JUNE 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. Please send to Pam Burkholder at [pamb@fpcfw.org](mailto:pamb@fpcfw.org) or bring by the church office.

## 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.



## PUBLISHER INFO

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# STAYING CONNECTED

## YOUTH STAY CONNECTED THROUGH ZOOM



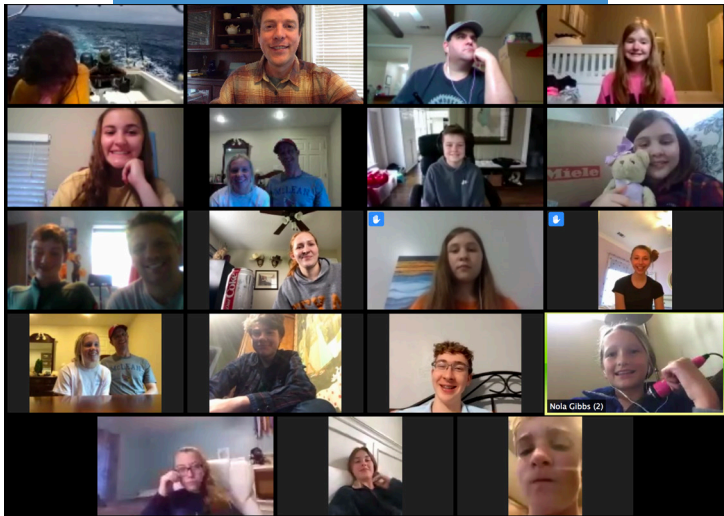
During this isolating time of quarantine and living into our Youth Group motto that “Anything’s Possible,” our congregation’s middle school and high school youth are invited to participate in Zoom youth activities during the week (pictured above, a Zoom youth meeting!) to help keep our Youth Group connected in this strange time! While learning to navigate a completely new way to do youth ministry, some of our activities include: fun icebreakers, goofy games, virtual scavenger hunts, devotionals, and more! “Everyone’s Welcome,” so youth are always encouraged to bring a friend along to join the fun and time to grow closer to Christ and one another.

Here is a list of weekly Zoom Youth Group opportunities:

- Zoom Middle School Youth Group: 2-2:45 p.m. on Sunday
- Zoom High School Youth Group: 3-3:45 p.m. on Sunday
- Zoom Middle School Girls Group: 7-7:45 p.m. on Wednesday
- Zoom High School Bible Study: 7:30-8:15 p.m. on Wednesday

*\*Middle School is grades 6-8, High School is grades 9-12, and 8th grade Confirmation students are invited to participate in High School Bible Study.*

*\*If interested, contact Josh Stewart (josh@fpcfw.org) for the Zoom info for these meetings or to sign up for his Remind distribution list.*



Stay connected and build new relationships by signing up to be a First Pres Pen-Pal! Let us know you would like to participate and we will connect you with someone in the church. When the time comes for us to come back together, the Fellowship Committee will plan a fun gathering to meet our new pen-pals in person to celebrate new relationships and renewed community. For more information or to get a link to the sign-up form, contact Eric Varnon (evarnon@fpcfw.org). *Pen-Pals is hosted by the Fellowship Committee.*



# STAYING CONNECTED



## COMMUNITY CROSSROADS CONTINUES TO SERVE

Community Crossroads is continuing distribution of sack lunches and groceries to meet the critical food needs of those most vulnerable in our community. Food is being distributed in a "to go" fashion, rather than gathering in groups inside the building.

During the month of April, sack lunch requests continued to exceed pre-social distancing numbers; up from 60-80 average requests to over 100. Community Crossroads is also continuing to distribute a hot "to go" meal on Wednesday nights from 6-7 p.m., with an average of 41 meals being distributed each week.



## A SPECIAL THANKS...

Community Crossroads thanks all those who have been able to continue the important food ministries of Community Crossroads during this difficult time. Church members, community volunteers, and church staff continue to meet the challenge with grace and compassion. Thanks to: Don Axley, Cara Sanders, Steve Christian, D'Anne Dorough, Meg Young, Randy Toombs, Carol Toombs, Rachel Garlington, Ken Garlington, Jacqueline Bender, Brandon Mountjoy, the Young Adults Class, Carol Anderson, Gary Anderson, Andy Barham, Sue Barham, Janeen Lamkin, Jeff Garner, Bob Gray, Kay Mitchell, John Mitchell, Kevin Mitchell, Deneice Allen, Keri Casciari, Seferino Sanchez, Rick Moran, Heath Brosi, Norbert Jankovich, Antonio Salas, Celeste Falter, Blake Hargrave, Leah Wyckoff, Chris Bartley, and Eric Varnon. Thanks also to Bill and Pat Gordon for coordinating lunches delivered to our pantry volunteers. Thank you to everyone who has provided and continues to provide these lunches!

# STAYING CONNECTED





# STAYING CONNECTED: YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AT WORK

## HOW OTHERS BENEFIT FROM YOUR GENEROSITY

These unprecedented times are difficult, and the financial toll is devastating for many people and businesses. Among them are non-profits and charities who serve on the front lines of essential services to support vulnerable populations (often, at an increase over their budgeted expenses), and who also have had to cancel fundraisers and other events that provide needed income.

As individuals, it can seem a bit overwhelming, and, simultaneously, we can feel helpless in the face of so much need. The Mission Outreach Committee continues our pledged support to many organizations in our community. Your ongoing tithes and contributions allow us to connect with our partnerships and those with whom we engage in mission and outreach.

You are helping others – in fact, over two dozen agencies, educational institutions, and non-profits benefit from your generosity. These gifts, just under \$1.5 million dollars, are in addition to the ministries at Community Crossroads that are also fully funded by our operational budget. Thank you for your giving that enriches the lives of countless people through these incredible organizations:



### GLOBAL:

- Havana Seminary Capital Campaign
- Living Water International
- Living Waters for the World
- PCUSA Shared Mission Giving
- PCUSA Worldwide Mission (3 coworkers)
- This Child Here



### LOCAL:

- Camp Fire
- DRC - Solutions
- Grace Presbytery Youth Support
- Habitat for Humanity (Trinity chapter)
- Kids Hope USA
- North Side Inter Community Agency
- James L. West Center for Dementia Care
- Permanent Supportive Housing through New Leaf Community Services
- Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services
- Presbyterian Night Shelter
- South Central Alliance of Churches
- Tarrant Area Food Bank (backpack program)
- Tarrant Churches Together
- United Community Centers



### EDUCATIONAL:

- Austin College
- Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- Brite Divinity School
- Presbyterian Pan American School
- Presbyterian Association of Musicians
- Schreiner University

# JOYS & CONCERNS

*Following are the joys and concerns shared as of April 23, 2020.  
To respect the privacy of those listed, names are included only when  
the individuals grant their permission.*

## *Our loving sympathy to...*

Family and friends of **Bill Puls**, who died on April 15. Surviving family are Gina Puls, Kelly and **Kelly Puls**, Kelcy Cranford, Kelly Puls, and **Kit Puls**.

**Austin and Courtney Stubblefield**, on the death of his mother, Elizabeth Stubblefield on April 7 in Liberty Hill, Texas. Other FPC family include granddaughters, Ava and Avery Stubblefield.

**Ralph and Barbara Reece** on the death of their sister-in-law, Linda Kruse, on March 31 in Naperville, Illinois.

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

**Paula Hawpe, Lynda Hamilton, Francisco Menchaca, Jay Dickson, Mary Farmer, Diane Satterlee, Bob Wilson,** and **Jerry Brownlee**, who are recovering from surgery or injury.

**Charles Florsheim, Janelle Eklund, Sue Barham, Frank Stewart, Bob Gorham, Karl Travis, Rush Hart, Marilyn Wilson, Phyllis Propes, Emma Coley, Lisa Shiner,** and **Frances Blake**, who are dealing with illness or undergoing treatment.

## *Our caring prayers for extended family include...*

Audrey Hart (great-granddaughter of **Bob and Jane Trask**), Ann Welch (sister of **Andrea Frankenfield**), Mike Bryan (son-in-law of **Mary Alice Dobesh**), Mark Craft (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**), Lisa Koenig (niece of **Wanda Williams**), 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**. And 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**.

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...*

Jordan and **Whitney Giancoli** on the birth of Holden James on April 14. Proud FPC family are big sister, Isla and grandparents, **Jim and Martha Cunningham**.

# SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The Session met by Zoom for its April 19 Stated Meeting. Highlights of the meeting include:

- Opening devotional and prayer by Dan Moore
- Updates from the Pastors on the on-going ministry of the church, including increased food ministry at Community Crossroads
- Approval of a motion from the Trustees to grant up to \$150,000 to Grace Presbytery for assistance to churches struggling to maintain payroll during the pandemic. Associate Pastor Michael Waschevski (Committee on Ministry Moderator) is working with the presbytery on this assistance program.
- Heard a report from the Beaumont Task Force on conversations with the Nominating Committee
- Agreed to reschedule the March 22 Congregational Meeting that was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions to a later date when it may be possible to gather in person
- Heard an update from the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) that they continue their work
- Greg McCoy closed the meeting with the common prayer for our PNC that is included each week in the Penn Street Online

## 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 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.*



THE  
penn street  
LETTER

First Presbyterian Church  
1000 Penn Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76102

#### PERIODICALS

##### POSTMASTER:

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

# Read the Bible in 9 Months

Want to take advantage of time at home to catch up on some reading? Welcome to Read the Bible in 9 Months! As you commit to the discipline of daily scripture reading know that you are held in prayer – and joined by many others who are also engaged in this discipline. The second 30 days of readings are copied below (for the first 30 days of readings, see last month's newsletter). For a complete schedule, please contact Celeste Falter ([cfalter@fpcfw.org](mailto:cfalter@fpcfw.org)) in the church office.

Day 1: Psalm 55; Exodus 24-27  
Day 2: Psalms 56,57; Exodus 28-31  
Day 3: Psalm 58; Exodus 32-34  
Day 4: Psalm 59; Exodus 35-40  
Day 5: Psalm 60; Hebrews 1-3  
Day 6: Psalms 61,62; Hebrews 4-6  
Day 7: Psalms 63,64; Hebrews 7-10  
Day 8: Psalms 65,66; Hebrews 11-13  
Day 9: Psalm 67; Proverbs 1-3  
Day 10: Psalm 68; Proverbs 4-7  
Day 11: Psalm 69; Proverbs 8-10  
Day 12: Psalms 70,71; Leviticus 1-5  
Day 13: Psalm 72; Leviticus 6,7  
Day 14: Psalm 73; Leviticus 8-10  
Day 15: Psalm 74; Leviticus 11-13

Day 16: Psalms 75,76; Leviticus 14-17  
Day 17: Psalm 77; Leviticus 18-20  
Day 18: Psalm 78; Leviticus 21,22  
Day 19: Psalm 79; Leviticus 23-25  
Day 20: Psalm 80; Leviticus 26,27  
Day 21: Psalms 81,82; Numbers 1-3  
Day 22: Psalm 83; Numbers 4-6  
Day 23: Psalm 84; Numbers 7,8  
Day 24: Psalm 85; Numbers 9-11  
Day 25: Psalm 86; Numbers 12-14  
Day 26: Psalm 87; Numbers 15-17  
Day 27: Psalm 88; Numbers 18-21  
Day 28: Psalm 89; Numbers 22-24  
Day 29: Psalm 90; Numbers 25-27  
Day 30: Psalm 91; Numbers 28-30