

THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

JUNE 2020 | Volume 20, Number 6



WORK GROUP ON REOPENING FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

At its May 17 meeting the Session received a report from the Work Group consisting of Elders Mike Cane (MD), Claudia Duff, Pam Grossman, Brian Hocker, and the Staff Leadership Team of Robyn Michalove, Joshua Stewart, Dana Fickling, and Michael Waschevski. The Work Group was formed to resource the Session in decision making over the coming weeks and months concerning how and when First Presbyterian might reopen for in person ministry.

The Work Group affirmed the *Book of Order* reminding us that congregations are “the fellowship of women, men, and children united in covenant relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ.” (G-1.0102) As covenant communities, we are called to “lead a life worthy of the calling to which (we) have been called, with all patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4.1-3)

The church is being called to exercise patience as we continue to bear with one another in love during these extraordinary times. Bearing with one another in love requires us to make decisions for the health and safety of the whole congregation and community – especially those at risk due to underlying health conditions and age. Bearing with one another in love and maintaining our unity should not lead to divisions within a congregation based on age or underlying health conditions.

The Work Group researched governmental and religious guidelines, publications, and plans related to reopening

of churches. Governor Abbott’s Executive Order of April 27, 2020, the Tarrant County Health Department COVID-19 updates, Grace Presbytery Guidance for Congregations, and several plans produced by other congregations were very helpful. A common feature of many plans includes thinking of reopening in phases. In addition to considering what is wise to reopen in each phase, the necessary metrics for entering a phase and the precautions required in that phase are of utmost importance. To guide the Session in leading through the pandemic, the Work Group offered a plan for a Phased Approach to Reopening. (See page 3 of this edition.)

Based on the local Substantial spread of COVID-19 the Work Group unanimously agreed that it is too soon to begin resuming In Person worship on Sunday mornings. Even after In Person worship resumes, the worship experience will be very different. Required social distancing, wearing of masks, sanitation, reworked practices and rituals, and several other details will need to be planned for and monitored as the pandemic continues. Online worship, even when there is a return to modified In Person worship, will need to continue in some form.

The Work Group made several recommendations to the Session which were unanimously approved:

- Endorse the Phased Approach to Reopening as a guide for Session decision making.

- Continue Online Worship at least through June.
- Ask the Worship Committee to begin making plans for required accommodations In Person worship will necessitate.
- Empower the Moderator to create a task force to research equipment and personnel needs necessary to implement live streaming of worship once modified In Person worship resumes.
- Encourage Session committees, in consultation with the Work Group, to consider how to make best use of technology as they continue their work and ministries virtually until such time as it is safe and wise to meet in person.
- Receive monthly updates and recommendations from the Work Group until such time the church has fully reopened to the public.

The Work Group will continue to resource the Session as plans within the phases are reviewed and refined in light of further guidance and decisions made by local and state governmental and health authorities. Please keep the Session and the Work Group in your prayers as they seek to lead us faithfully and responsibly through these anxious times. We remember the words and ministry of Jesus that call us to care for the most vulnerable among us.

If you have questions about the Phased Approach to Reopening, please feel free to contact any member of the Work Group.

To view the complete Phased Approach to Reopening, see page 3 of this edition.



PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

As we enter the season of Pentecost, I am finding myself even more grateful for the Spirit's on-going work in the church. During this pandemic we have all experienced moments of fear, anxiety, and grief as everything has changed. In the midst of the profound changes and challenges we have been facing, we have encountered the Spirit's guidance and power to worship, serve, and relate to one another in new and creative ways. While these new and creative ways have brought their own stresses and strains, it is abundantly clear that, through the Spirit, First Presbyterian Church is alive and well and faithful and generous.

As conditions change weekly in relation to reopening our communities and state, the Session has been carefully considering faithful and safe ways to approach reopening First Presbyterian Church. On page one of this edition you can read of the Session's decisions from its May 17 meeting. Page 3 includes *A Phased Approach to Reopening*.

In this edition of the *Penn Street Letter* and in *Penn Street Online* editions throughout this time of pandemic, we continue to celebrate the many ways ministry has continued virtually. Zoom meetings of Session, committees, youth groups, choirs, church school classes, and small groups. A Zoom Senior Dinner. Receiving a new member via Zoom. Virtual worship each week through Facebook Live and YouTube. Phone calls. Hand written letters. The list goes on...

Meanwhile, the essential food ministries of Community Crossroads have continued in a modified format while meeting ever increasing need. Currently neighbors are served on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. During this time not only have sack lunches, groceries, formula and diapers, and the Wednesday evening hot meal continued, but a new Monday morning breakfast was added based on need!

As we move into the month of June, look for new virtual opportunities for nurture and fellowship for children, youth, and adults. Be sure to visit our website often. (www.fpcf.org) Yes, the Spirit is alive and well and at work in and through First Presbyterian Church, breathing life into our mission statement in new and exciting ways. Inspiring Disciples...Engaging the World. Thanks be to God!

God's peace to you,

Michael

MAY SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The Session met by Zoom for its May 17 Stated Meeting. Below are highlights from the meeting:

- Patrick Sheppard led the opening devotional and prayer
- Heard updates from the pastors on their current ministry activities
- Heard an update from the Pastor Nominating Committee Chair
- Approved the creation of an endowed fund for homeless initiatives from proceeds from a recent bequest
- Approved the recommendation from the Beaumont Task Force on Nominating Committee procedures related to committee chairs and staffing for 2021
- Approved moving the postponed March 22 congregational meeting to approve Bylaw changes to a meeting that will include a virtual town hall prior to a US mail ballot vote this summer
- Approved the report of the Work Group on Reopening First Presbyterian Church (see article on page one)

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the JULY issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, JUNE 24**. 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@fpcf.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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PHASED APPROACH TO REOPENING

Preparatory Phase (current situation):

Work Group researches and reviews relevant governmental and ecclesiastical guidance. Work Group recommends any necessary actions required to facilitate a Phased Approach to Reopening.

Work Group identifies necessary supplies that would need to be on hand to enter phase one (masks, hand sanitizers, signage, thermometers, etc.) and Administration Office begins to acquire. Work group makes plans for protocol and procedures for contact tracing of individuals contracting COVID-19, who had contact with church members/employees/visitors upon returning to church. Continue encouraging and facilitating "contactless" ministry and fellowship.

Essential In Person ministries allowed to gather people on campuses: Food Ministries at Community Crossroads; Worship preparation and recording; Safety and Security of the campuses including repairs and improvements; Maintaining financial functions; inurnments, interments, and scatterings in the Memorial Garden for family groups no more than 10; outside weddings for groups no more than 10.

	METRIC TO ENTER	REQUIRED PRECAUTIONS	POSSIBLE OPENINGS
PHASE ONE	14 day decline in virus spread and deaths as reported by Tarrant County Health department, as well as adequate hospital capacity. Continued decline in virus spread and no spike in cases being reported at churches.	Masks required. Staff temperature checks. Hand sanitizers upon entry. Frequent handwashing. Twice daily sanitizing of common areas. 6 feet of social distancing.	Church Office with staggered staff to reduce census and church members individually allowed in office as necessary to meet with pastors or staff.
PHASE TWO	Tarrant County Health lowers spread alert from Substantial to Minimal to Moderate*. *(Tarrant County Health terminology for describing extent of the COVID-19 spread.)	Continued precautions from Phase One. Sanitization after each small group meeting.	Church Office fully staffed, as necessary. Work from Home encouraged/accommodated. Small groups possible, as necessary. (Face to face committee meetings, etc.) Modified In Person worship w/ required Executive Order precautions while continuing virtual worship. Reduced EEC census, if possible, with CDC and Tarrant County Guidelines. Community Crossroads selected ministries.
PHASE THREE	Tarrant County Health lowers spread to None to Minimal.	Hand sanitization. Frequent handwashing. Daily sanitization of building.	All Group gatherings allowed with necessary precautions. Modified In Person worship and live streaming, including WOW EEC full census if possible.

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES!



LOLA ADAMS

High School: R.L. Paschal High School

Plan for next year: I will be attending Tulane University next fall, and I plan on double majoring in Business and English, with a focus on Marketing!

Favorite FPC memory: My favorite youth group memory was the mission trip to Corpus Christi and Rockport, Texas. There is nothing like sleeping on uncomfortable cots and working on houses damaged by a hurricane with the people who are walking with you on your faith journey.

Message to church family: Thank you to everyone who has been here at this church, from my baptism to my graduation you have all been role models and leaders. Finding a life path for myself to choose is going to be extremely difficult with so many amazing people showing me so many amazing and fulfilling things to do with my future.

Favorite Bible verse: My favorite Bible verse through my life has been Proverbs 13.20, "Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm."



MEDY KEPNGA

High School: R.L. Paschal High School

Plan for next year: In the fall I plan on attending the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. I am going to be majoring in Architecture.

Favorite FPC memory: My favorite youth group memory was the kids against hunger project because it was fun and made me happy to know that children would be getting food.

Message to church family: I want to thank FWPC church families for being so welcoming and nice and including us in the church activities. Thank you!!

Favorite Bible verse: Matthew 6.34, "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."



LAUREN DOROUGH (ELDER)

High School: Trinity Valley School

Plan for next year: In the fall I will be attending Texas Christian University and I am planning on majoring in either nutrition or computer science.

Favorite FPC memory: My favorite youth trip was the mission trip to Cuba. I made so many good memories with my friends in youth group and the people there were so fun and welcoming. It was one of the best experiences of my life, and I will never forget it.

Message to church family: I want to say thank you to everyone at the church for being so supportive and helping with everything along the way. I am so appreciative for everyone at First Pres and their encouragement.

Favorite Bible verse: Two of my favorites are "In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" Proverbs 3.6. "Strength and dignity are her clothing" Proverbs 31.25.



WARREN KEPNGA

High School: Benbrook Middle-High School

Plan for next year: I am going to the University of Memphis and I'll be studying Biomedical engineering. I also have plans on playing soccer at the school.

Favorite FPC memory: My favorite Youth Group memory was the kids against hunger mission project. I love to help people in need and it was very fun.

Message to church family: I want to thank the Church for being very loving and welcoming. I am very thankful to have shared memories with the Church and youth group.

Favorite Bible verse: Romans 12.2, "Do not be conformed to this world,[a] but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect."

You're invited to send congratulatory cards or letters to any of our graduates care of First Presbyterian Church (Senior's Name c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1000 Penn Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102). Please mail items before the end of June.

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES!



RACHEL GARLINGTON

High School: Arlington Heights High School

Plan for next year: I will be attending Trinity University in San Antonio. I am going to major in political science and history. My hope is to attend law school and work in the field of criminal and prison reform.

Favorite FPC memory: My fondest church memory was going to Cuba including the second time with Chris Bartley, Mary Salazar, Kristin Glass, Bob and Wil'Iwin Chochola. I formed long lasting relationships with them and I saw the face of God in the people of Union de Reyes.

Message to church family: Thank you to all the members of the church who have held my hand throughout my childhood and helped me grow into the person I am today. And a special thanks to the staff, volunteers and guests at WOW who have shown me kindness and love.

Favorite Bible verse: Psalm 89.14 "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you."



CLAIRE WALLACE

High School: All Saints' Episcopal School

Plan for next year: Headed to the University of Georgia in the fall.

Favorite FPC memory: Climbing on the wall every Sunday and after Day School with friends and daring to jump off!

Message to church family: I am thankful to have attended First Presbyterian Church with my grandparents, great Aunt and Uncle and cousins. It has been fun to worship together!

Favorite Bible verse: Philippians 4.6, "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."



EMMA HENRY (ELDER)

High School: R.L. Paschal High School

Plan for next year: Attend Texas Christian University in fall 2020 and study business

Favorite FPC memory: Cuba!

Specifically salsa dancing, dancing in the rain, and having fun with everyone at the beach

Message to church family: I'm so glad that FPC has been such a big part of my life. From my baptism at First Pres to Vacation Bible School to youth trips to serving on the Session, church has been a constant for me. I will always remember the bonds I've formed with my peers and the adults who taught and mentored me. Thank you!

Favorite Bible verse: The Footprints in the Sand poem that is believed to be inspired by Deuteronomy 1.31 "and in the wilderness, where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, just as one carries a child, all the way that you traveled until you reached this place."



KENNEDY WOOTEN

High School: Southwest Christian School

Plan for next year: Attend Arkansas in the fall, General studies major

Favorite FPC memory: All the Kidquake trips, and her youth mission trips to Alabama, New

Orleans, and Rockport...Alabama being her favorite due to getting to go to the beach in the evening after serving at the food bank during the day.

Message to church family: Thank you for all the love and support through the years!

Favorite Bible verse: Philippians 4.13 "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

You're invited to send congratulatory cards or letters to any of our graduates care of First Presbyterian Church (Senior's Name c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1000 Penn Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102). Please mail items before the end of June.



COMING SOON: NEW FPC WEBSITE AND ONLINE DIRECTORY

After several months of work and dedication, First Presbyterian Church's newly redesigned website will launch in early June. The new site will also include a long-awaited and much-requested online membership directory. The directory will be secure and accessible only to the congregation by individual username and password. Listings will include your name, phone number(s), address, and email address. In the coming days, you will receive an email with more information about how to log in. If you do not have an active or valid email address on file with the church, you will not be able to set up a login and access the directory. Please use the contact information listed below to submit your email address and correct any information.

You may also choose to opt out of the directory listing (which will remove your information from the online directory, so others cannot view it) by contacting Dana Fickling (dfickling@fpcf.org). Be advised that opting out also means you will not have access to the directory.

To update your email address, or a family member's email address or other information, contact Patty O'Brien (pobrien@fpcf.org).

FPC HABITAT BUILD, JUNE 13

First Presbyterian Church is once again teaming up with Trinity Habitat for Humanity to build a home at 1253 New York Avenue, 76104. The FPC work day is scheduled for Saturday, June 13. Sign up at <https://trinityhabitat.volunteerhub.com/lp/firstpresby/>. Work time is 7:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Due to Covid-19 precautions, individuals are encouraged to bring their own snacks. Bottled water will be provided.

FPC WELCOMES PASTORAL RESIDENT JUNE 1



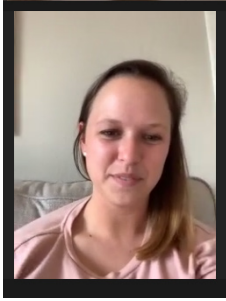
On June 1 First Presbyterian welcomes Brendan McLean as our first Pastoral Resident through a new Austin Seminary Post-Graduate Pastoral Residency program. Funded through a generous gift to Austin Seminary, the Pastoral Residency Program provides funding each year for two graduating seniors from the seminary "to be

hosted for a two-year pastoral residency, under the supervision of an experienced and capable pastoral mentor, in a thriving, best-practice congregation of the seminary's designation." First Presbyterian Church was invited by the seminary to consider hosting a full-time Pastoral Resident, and the Session enthusiastically accepted the invitation. The seminary's invitation in the midst of a transition in pastoral leadership speaks highly of First Presbyterian's health and vitality. Brendan will serve among us for two years, full-time. Michael will serve as the official pastoral mentor to Brendan in fulfillment of the requirements of the Residency Program. Our clergy team of Robyn, Josh, and Michael look forward to welcoming Brendan into ministry!

While at FPC, Brendan will experience the full range of pastoral ministry including worship and sacraments, weddings and funerals, adult education, pastoral care, mission outreach, and church leadership as he refines his skills for pastoral ministry as he begins his ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Brendan brings with him many gifts for ministry – especially the ministries of worship, pastoral care, and education. He has recently completed service as a Chaplain Intern with Hospice Austin and as an Instructional Aide at Austin Seminary for Introduction to the Old Testament, Introduction to the New Testament, and Elementary Biblical Hebrew. Last summer Brendan served on the ministry team at Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina.

In addition to his Master of Divinity degree from Austin Seminary, Brendan holds the Bachelor of Arts degree in Music and Religious Studies from Coe College. A candidate for Minister of Word and Sacrament under the care of East Iowa Presbytery, Brendan will be examined for ordination prior to arriving in Fort Worth, with plans to ordain him later in the summer, when it is possible for them to gather in person. Brendan will then be received by Grace Presbytery as a minister member.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBER!



Leah Boom recently joined by transfer from San Pedro Presbyterian Church in San Antonio. Leah is the first new member to join by Zoom during a Young Adult event on Friday, May 15. She recently earned a Master's Degree from Trinity University and works as an Administrative Fellow with Texas Health Southwest Hospital.



JOYS & CONCERNS

Following are the joys and concerns shared as of May 20, 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 **Bobby Wilson**, who died on April 26. Surviving FPC family is wife, **Markoleta Wilson**.

Family and friends of **Marilyn Ross**, who died on May 7.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Joel Salazar, Francisco Menchaca, Jay Dickson, Diane Satterlee, and Jerry Brownlee, who are recovering from surgery or injury.

Joyce Brower, Margo Dean, Charles Florsheim, Janelle Eklund, Jean Gorham, Sue Barham, Frank Stewart, 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...

Ted Mayo (brother of **Melinda Van't Slot**), 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 Spahr** 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 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.

PNC MAY UPDATE

COVID-19 has not slowed the progress of the PNC, though it has altered our mode of communication. Despite the inability to meet in person, we continue virtually as our congregation does, on zoom (pictured above, a recent PNC Zoom meeting), over email and document sharing, and by conference call.

The PNC is actively receiving referrals, reviewing and communicating with potential candidates from across the country. We prayerfully consider all information and candidates that are presented; our process is thorough and is vetted through the creation of subcommittees. We expect this process to continue through the fall.

We are heartened by the number of Presbyterian leaders and individuals that know of our search and hold our congregation, our pastors, and Karl, in prayer. Thank you for your continued patience and prayers.

Respectfully, *The Pastor Nominating Committee*

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

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WWW.FPCFW.ORG

NEW OPPORTUNITIES THIS SUMMER

VISIT FPCFW.ORG AND WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT UPCOMING VIRTUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Book Study - *Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty* by Walter Brueggeman
- Spiritual Formation will offer a church school class and covenant group based on the book *Boundless Compassion* by Joyce Rupp. Stay tuned for news on this inspiring educational offering - coming soon. In the meantime, you can learn more at www.joycerupp.com/boundless-compassion-2/
- New Sunday School virtual classes
- Series on *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*
- July film series
- Circles of Christ (partnership with Mount Moriah) virtual event

MO RANCH ALL CHURCH RETREAT

Registration is now open for the All Church Labor Day Retreat at Mo Ranch. We recognize that many factors may influence your decision to attend in September, therefore registration is open but no deposit is due at this time. Non-refundable full payment is due August 15. If you are considering attending, we encourage you to register now at fpcfw.org. The sooner we register (preferably by June 1), we can get an idea of how many rooms to reserve for guaranteed housing. For more information, contact Robyn Michalove (robym@fpcfw.org).