

THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

AUGUST 2020 | Volume 20, Number 8

SESSION UPDATE ON THE PHASED APPROACH PLAN FOR REOPENING

The Session's Work Group on Reopening updated the Session at their July 19 meeting. Since the Phased Approach to Reopening (see page 6) was approved on May 17, the Work Group has continued to monitor the local health data provided by Tarrant County Health and consulted with committees and staff as preparations are made for reopening when the required local health metrics are met. The Work Group engaged the Session on several items:

- since the June Session meeting, the local virus threat has increased rather than decreased, including a rise in the positivity rate of COVID-19 tests in Tarrant County. After a thorough review of the Tarrant County Health most up to date statistics, the Work Group recommended, and Session unanimously approved, revising the Metric to Enter Phase One. The revision is: "Two-week decline in virus spread and deaths as reported by the Tarrant county Health Department, along with adequate hospital capacity, a declining positivity rate, and other metrics that may apply."
- the Session concurred with the recommendation of the Work Group and Retreat Planning Committee to cancel the 2020 All Church Labor Day retreat at Mo-Ranch due to safety concerns.

- the Work Group invited the Session to share other concerns or thoughts concerning the Phased Approach to Reopening Plan. Session made no other changes at this time.

The Session will continue to receive regular updates from the Work Group. The Session remains saddened by the fact that the local public health conditions concerning the spread of COVID-19 are not yet improved to the point of safely reopening our facilities for FPC's ministries and yearns to bring people back to our campuses safely for worship, the EEC, and our other ministries.

During this time we remember that as a covenant community 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. Please join the Session in keeping our congregation and community in prayer.

MISSION ON THE MOVE: OPEN TO ALL AGES WEEKEND EDITION, AUGUST 7-9



MISSION ON THE MOVE

This year, Mission on the Move, traditionally a weekday camp for older elementary children and middle school youth, is expanding to **include anyone and everyone in our congregation** with a weekend of activities to get us all moving to serve our neighbors with love and compassion. The weekend will include several opportunities for service including an at-home food and bottled water drive to benefit neighbors experiencing homelessness at Community Crossroads and DRC, preparing lunch to-go meals in your home for the Presbyterian Night Shelter, and a sidewalk art project.

To register or learn more about Mission on the Move, visit FPCFW.ORG/MOTM.



PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

One of the event causalities of the pandemic that I will especially miss this year is the Summer Olympics, rescheduled for the summer of 2021. I enjoy watching the opening ceremonies and seeing the athletes from around the globe march proudly behind their nation's flag. In a world that often seems divisive, it is inspiring to see

countries come together peacefully to support athleticism and camaraderie.

Sports is a universal experience, and it was a familiar part of life for Roman citizens in the first century. Athletes were iconic figures of the ancient world, and drawing on this popularity, the New Testament writers chose to convey discipleship with athletic metaphors. There are multiple references but here are a few familiar ones: "I press on toward the goal to win the prize..." (Philippians 3.12). "Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us..." (Hebrews 12.1). "I have finished the race; I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4.7).

The athletic metaphors seem appropriate to our life today. What many of us assumed was a weeks-long sprint when we first closed the church due to shelter at home restrictions, turned into a marathon with a confusing and uncertain finish line. And yet, each day, we keep moving. We keep putting one foot in front of the other, walking by faith and not sight, trusting God's provision for our marathon of faithful living. We find encouragement from scripture to continue stretching out in service, showing up in solidarity, engaging in racial justice, and hydrating our spirits in God's word and prayer. The hope is that we are moving, and God accompanies us into God's hopeful future.

Church family, be encouraged in these days that sometimes drag on like a never-ending marathon. Run with perseverance. Fix your eyes on Jesus. God will give us the strength we need to press on. In the words of the prophet Isaiah: "those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40.31). Referencing this scripture, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "If you can't fly, run. If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl. But by all means, keep moving."

Peace,

Robyn

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.

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the SEPTEMBER issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, AUGUST 19**. 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.

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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@firstpres_fw



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First Presbyterian Church IN THE NEWS

PROVIDING HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS

Editor's Note: The following excerpted article, written by Scott Nishimura, appeared recently in Fort Worth Magazine. The article details a permanent supportive housing project that our Session supports through New Leaf Community Services. To read the full text of the article, visit fwtx.com/news.

A coalition of private developers, City of Fort Worth, First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth, leading local foundations, and the DRC Solutions to End Homelessness agency is nearing ground-breaking on a 48-unit, \$4.7 million apartment project in West Fort Worth for chronically homeless people.

The project, at 4444 Quall Trail off of River Oaks Boulevard near River Oaks, would be the first standalone one partially funded by \$5 million that Fort Worth pledged last fall for permanent supportive housing – apartments for people who've been homeless more than a year, have disabilities, and need case management. The coalition hopes it sets a model that can be used in the future on similar projects citywide, to provide housing for Fort Worth's estimated 1,400-plus chronically homeless.

"The hope is this a project we can replicate across Fort Worth," Andy Miller, head of healthcare and social services giving at The Morris Foundation in Fort Worth, credited with taking a lead role in organizing foundations, said in an interview.

The city and its housing development arm, the Fort Worth Housing Finance Corp., are close to completing documents on \$1.7 million in two forgivable loans to the project's recently formed nonprofit owner, New Leaf Community Service, expected as soon as the end of July, Chad LaRoque, the city's housing development and grants manager, said. Once those documents are done, the group is ready to break ground. Assuming ground-breaking occurs soon, the group expects to complete the development and open it to tenants next year.

"We've got all the financing in place; we're just finishing the contracts with the City of Fort Worth," Flora Brewer, one of the project group, said. "Once that's done, we're going to break ground."

The city's \$5 million pledge to permanent supportive housing requires a 3-to-1 community match. First Presbyterian Church, a founder and supporter of the Presbyterian Night Shelter in Fort Worth, led the formation of New Leaf and committed \$1 million to the permanent supportive housing project in conversations started under now-retired pastor Karl Travis, who entered hospice care in recent months. And the same time it made the commitment to New Leaf, the church pledged \$1 million over three years to the Night Shelter. (To read the full text of this article, visit fwtx.com/news.)



SUMMER CAMP IN A BOX

This summer the Children's Nurture Committee found a way for our children to participate in a camp, even though we cannot be together in person. We asked families to sign up for Ferncliff's Camp in a Box, which provides five days of activities for children and their families. Each day, the activities focus on different subjects to help us see God in nature and our community. Through art projects, games, reflections, and prayers, our families can get away from technology and have fun together. We even established a private Facebook group where families can share pictures and videos along the way to create a larger sense of community. It has been a wonderful way for families to reconnect after missing each other over the past few months!



"I love Camp in a Box! God created all the animals and I like to see the snails with my magnifying glass. The box has a lot of fun things in it, and I like to open a new bag every day to see the surprises! My favorite part of camp so far is drawing a map of my "square of life" and playing creation charades with my family!" – Henry Austin, age 5

"Camp in a box has activities to do throughout the week like tie-dye, origami, and clay pinch pots. Each activity helps us learn different parts of God's creation. We are doing it because we cannot be near people, so this is a fun way to feel like you are at camp and learn about God at the same time. It is awesome!" – Karter Frohlich, age 8

BE INSPIRED...

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



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.

More information about how to join the weekly worship experience can be found on our website (fpcfw.org/ministries/worship-music/), Facebook (facebook.com/firstpresfw), or in the weekly worship email.

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

AND, DON'T FORGET...

To check in during virtual worship! Please remember to register your presence in virtual worship each Sunday by using the "Online Worshipers, Click Here" button on FPC's Worship & Music page (fpcfw.org/ministries/worship-music/). Think of this as the same as entering your information in a blue Ritual of Friendship pad during in-person worship. Please remember to indicate how many people are in your group, as multiple family members often worship together from a single login. 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.



Save the Date: Virtual Blessing of the Backpacks, August 16

As the new school year begins, we will have a virtual Blessing of the Backpacks on Sunday, August 16 during the 10 a.m. online worship service. All children will receive a backpack tag and First Pres Children's Ministry sticker in the mail prior to the blessing. Dig out your backpacks, diaper bags and digital devices to receive a special blessing from your church for the year ahead.



From the First Pres Kitchen with Heath Brosi

Many of us are spending extra time at home and in the kitchen these days. Heath Brosi, FPC's Director of Hospitality and Food Services, is bringing us some great recipe ideas *From the First Pres Kitchen*. Check out these short and fun cooking videos on YouTube (tinyurl.com/fpckitchen) or Facebook (facebook.com/firstpresfw) and look forward to more videos *From the First Pres Kitchen* in the coming weeks!

ENGAGE THE WORLD...

Below are a few ways you are invited to engage with others through church events and outreach opportunities in the coming weeks.

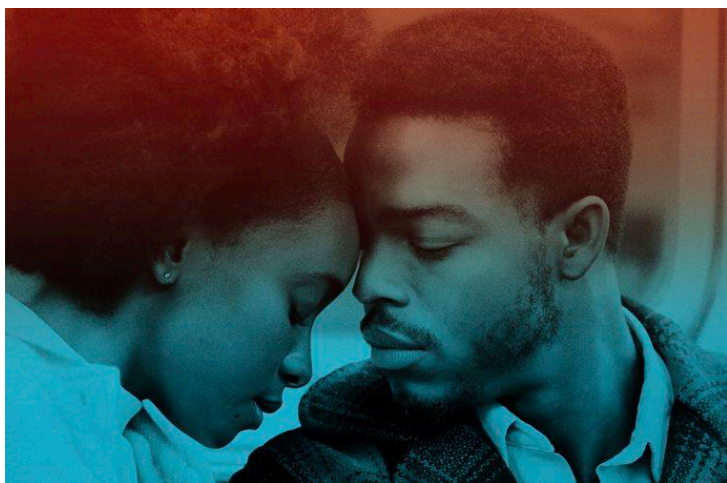


Provide Lunches for Crossroads Volunteers

Community Crossroads continues to operate under limited occupancy standards and volunteers are often unable to leave the campus for lunch. You're invited to sign up to provide lunches for these essential volunteers. A complete schedule and registration is available at [CareCalendar.org](https://carecalendar.org) (ID is 290867 and password is 5946).

Masks Needed for Crossroads Neighbors

Community Crossroads is now distributing masks in addition to the other services we provide. Your donations of any quantity or type of masks - manufactured or homemade, disposable or reusable - would be greatly appreciated. If you would like to contribute to this important aspect of the Community Crossroads mission, please contact Dori Al Hammami (dalhammami@fpcfw.org)



If Beale Street Could Talk Film Discussion, August 18

Join us for a Zoom call discussion of the movie *If Beale Street Could Talk*, sponsored by Circles of Christ, on Tuesday, August 18 at 6 p.m. Please watch the movie in advance. To register, visit fpcfw.org/race. You will receive a secure Zoom link and a few reflection questions in advance of the discussion.



Presbyterian Night Shelter Needs Breakfast and Lunch To-Go Bags

Thank you to everyone who has donated breakfast and lunch bags for the Presbyterian Night Shelter! First Presbyterian Church has been asked to help provide breakfast and lunch to-go sack meals for guests at the Presbyterian Night Shelter campus. Approximately 500 of both breakfast and lunch meals are needed each day. Below is a list of items for each bag:

Breakfast Brown Bags:

- Granola bar or breakfast or protein bar
- Dry cereal or individual pastry
- Fresh fruit or fruit cups
- Choose a beverage: water, juice, milk

Lunch Brown Bags:

- Sandwich of any kind with condiments on the side (please place in a plastic baggie)
- Chips
- Crackers or granola bar
- Fruit cup or fresh fruit
- Cookies or brownies
- Choose a beverage: water, soda, sports drink

When you are preparing food and assembling bags, please use sanitary precautions: thoroughly wash your hands, use gloves, and wear a mask. Home-baked goods are fine, in individual baggies. Children (or adults!) are welcome to decorate the brown bags if they like. If your bag has food that requires immediate refrigeration, please label them so they can be stored properly.

Please prepare these sack meals from home and deliver to the church on Thursdays between 9:30 - 10 a.m. Drive through the Great Hall covered driveway, where volunteers will retrieve them from your car.

Questions? Contact Robyn Michalove (robynm@fpcfw.org).

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	Two-week decline in virus spread and deaths as reported by the Tarrant county Health Department, along with adequate hospital capacity, a declining positivity rate, and other metrics that may apply.	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	Continued decline in virus spread and no spike in cases being reported at churches. 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.

JOYS & CONCERNS

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

Our loving sympathy to...

Ellen and Ralph Benson on the death of her father, Tom Cron, on July 18 in Corpus Christi. Other FPC family includes **Clayton Sue Benson, Charlotte Benson, and Clarke Benson.**

Jennifer and Bill Pettey on the death of her father, George Green on July 15 in Melbourne, Florida. Other FPC family includes **Natalie Pettey and Nathan Pettey.**

Sue Austin and Robert Smith on the death of her nephew, Asa Paul Rape on July 8.

Kim Schubert on the death of her mother, Judith Funke, on July 3 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Susie Kuipers, Scott Steffler, Sarah Graham, Julie Carter, Mary Jane Witt, Jay Dickson, Diane Satterlee, and Jerry Brownlee, who are recovering from surgery or injury.

Floyd Kinser, Joyce Brower, 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...

Paula Perkins (sister of **Susie Kuipers**), Dorothy Braly (mother of **Patty O'Brien**), 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**), 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.

Our congratulations and best wishes to...

Siobhan and Andrew Beaty on the birth of Katherine Jack "Kate" on April 17, 2020. Siobhan joined First Pres in 2002. Kate joins big sisters Irellyn and Caroline. Kate is the granddaughter of **Jim and Claudia Duff**.

FPC Membership App Coming This Month

In addition to First Presbyterian Church's newly redesigned website and online membership directory, an app will be available to the congregation beginning in August. The free app, ShelbyNext, is a mobile app version of the church's online directory. Like the directory, the app will be secure and accessible only to the congregation by individual username and password. Users will be able to access their own information, including giving records, and look up name, phone number, address, and email address for other members of the congregation.

Watch for more details and a launch date coming soon!

JULY SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

At its July 19 Stated Meeting the Session:

- Was led in an opening devotion and prayer by elder Greg McCoy
- Approved the Consent Agenda (minutes of June meetings, recording two weddings, transfer of two members to other congregations at their request)
- Heard reports from the Clerk and the Pastors
- Heard an update on Circles of Christ partnership activities and upcoming virtual educational events
- Heard an update on Community Crossroads Renovation and Construction
- Heard an update on New Leaf (Permanent Supportive Housing) progress, including an upcoming feature in *Fort Worth Magazine*
- Received the Monthly Update from the Work Group on Reopening (see page one of this edition)
- Received updates from the Livestream Task Force and the Worship Committee
- Received an update from the Finance Committee indicating the favorable financial position of the church through these uncertain times

STEPHEN MINISTRY CONTINUES TO CARE FOR YOU

Stephen Ministry continues to meet with care receivers. We are meeting in creative ways by phone, FaceTime, Zoom, and by email. If you are in need of a caring, confidential, non-judgmental ear, please contact Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski (817.335.1231, ext. 229 or michaelw@fpcfw.org).



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PERIODICALS

POSTMASTER:

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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) in the church office.

Day 1: Hosea 8-14
Day 2: Joel, Habakkuk
Day 3: Amos
Day 4: Obadiah, Jonah
Day 5: Micah; Nahum
Day 6: Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi
Day 7: Zechariah 1-6
Day 8: Zechariah 7-9
Day 9: Zechariah 10-14
Day 10: Daniel 1-3
Day 11: Daniel 4-6
Day 12: Daniel 7,8
Day 13: Daniel 9-12
Day 14: Psalm 94; Luke 1,2
Day 15: Psalm 95; Luke 3,4
Day 16: Psalm 96; Luke 5,6

Day 17: Psalm 97; Luke 7,8
Day 18: Psalm 98; Luke 9,10
Day 19: Psalm 99; Luke 11-13
Day 20: Psalm 100; Luke 14-16
Day 21: Psalm 101; Luke 17,18
Day 22: Psalm 102; Luke 19-21
Day 23: Psalm 103; Luke 22-24
Day 24: Acts 1,2
Day 25: Acts 3,4
Day 26: Acts 5,6
Day 27: Acts 7,8
Day 28: Acts 9-11
Day 29: Acts 12-14
Day 30: Acts 15-17
Day 31: Acts 18-20