

THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

OCTOBER 2020 | Volume 20, Number 10



Coping as a Couple in the Pandemic

During this time of pandemic, you might have noticed new or different challenges in your relationship. Join Dr. Evan Buja from The Center of Integrative Counseling and Psychology on Zoom on October 20 at 7 p.m. for Coping as a Couple in the Pandemic. We will talk about the many layers of increased stress and unprecedented situations you are living in. Learn more and register at fpcfw.org/covid.

CIRCLES OF CHRIST FILM DISCUSSION



Join Circles of Christ (First Presbyterian Church's partnership with Mount Moriah) on Tuesday, October 20 at 6 p.m. for a Zoom film discussion of the Netflix documentary *13th*. This thought-provoking documentary analyzes the Thirteenth Amendment, the criminalization of African Americans, and the U.S. prison boom. Register at fpcfw.org/race. Zoom information will be sent to registrants prior to the meeting.

Spiritual Formation Fall Course Offerings



FPC's Spiritual Formation Subcommittee is pleased to offer several Zoom-based educational opportunities for Fall 2020. Visit fpcfw.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.

BOUNDLESS COMPASSION BOOK STUDY: Mondays, October 5 through November 9, 3 - 4 p.m. Compassion is an essential component in the transformation of a society seeking peace and harmony. Although an innate quality, compassion needs nurturing and development for fuller expression. This program seeks to encourage compassionate living in both one's personal and professional life and to inspire growth into the kind of love that motivated Jesus' life and his mission for his disciples. Shirley Chambliss will facilitate this book study.

COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY: Sundays, November 1 through December 13, 11 a.m. - 12 p.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 six 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 disciplines in the Christian tradition. A team of facilitators from the Spiritual Formation Subcommittee will lead this class.



October is the month we discipline ourselves as a community of faith to reflect on God's generosity and our faithful response. The Stewardship theme for this month is *God's Continued Blessings*. Arriving over the next several days is the Stewardship publication filled with stories and reflections on *God's Continued Blessings* in this extraordinary and unprecedented year. Take time to read the stories, reflect on the pictures, and meditate on God's faithfulness through the ministries of First Presbyterian Church. The publication, paired with Psalm 67, which inspired the theme, will be a wonderful addition to your daily devotional practices and prayers.

Psalm 67 will also serve as the focus of the October preaching series. Each week we will go deeper into the psalm as we reflect on our gratitude for *God's Continued Blessings* as people of faith and as a community of faith. We will culminate our October Stewardship focus and preaching series by celebrating our commitments on October 25.

LET ALL THE PEOPLES
PRAISE THEE, O GOD.

PSALM 67



PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

Many times throughout this pandemic, as people of faith, we have looked to the Psalms for guidance and strength. During times of suffering, we identify strongly with the psalms of lament that speak to God about the reality of our pain. (I am so glad that the Presbyterian Women Bible study this year is about finding hope through prayers of lament!) Fortunately, as this year has been a challenging year on several fronts, the psalms of lament are the most numerous ones in scripture. And, also, there are other types of psalms that may bring us hope and comfort in difficult days.

Sometimes, when we are in a place of struggle, the psalms of praise may not immediately spring to mind. Yet I think turning our gaze to God when it is so tempting to turn our gaze inward and downward can bring healing and hope in our lives. The Stewardship Committee chose a psalm of praise to focus our generosity in this season. Psalm 67 says, "Let the peoples praise you, O God."

The truth is, our generosity as part of our praise of God continues even in difficult times. We stretch out our hands and hearts towards God and one another, regardless of circumstances. We are not in a contractual relationship with God...if God does this, then we will do that. We are in a covenantal relationship with God where trust is central. And so, even in 2020, we boldly say with the psalmist: "let all the peoples praise you."

As we praise God, generosity becomes what my yoga friends call a "heart opener." A heart opener is a posture, literal or metaphoric, that expands our emotional capacity to share love, compassion, gratitude, even when our bodies and minds are tense. So we share of our treasure and talents in this stewardship season and in each day that we trust God through the covenant that God completes in Jesus Christ.

May you find cause for praise and postures of gratitude. I praise God for this community of faith that is steeped in love and wonder and praise.

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 NOVEMBER issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, OCTOBER 21**. 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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Brendan McLean to be Ordained October 4



Join us virtually in celebrating the ordination of our Pastoral Resident, Brendan McLean, as a minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on Sunday, October 4 at 3 p.m.! As we are still in the times of COVID-19, all of the service will be virtual and accessible as a live stream from the public event page of the ordination service at [https://www.](https://www.facebook.com/events/238517834184702)

[facebook.com/events/238517834184702](https://www.facebook.com/events/238517834184702). Please join us in celebrating not only the beginning of Brendan's service in ministry, but also the ministry of the wider church!

Family Faith Formation Keeps Families Connected



As our way of doing ministry has changed, like other ministries of the church, the Children's Nurturing Committee had to develop a plan to continue programming of some kind virtually for the fall. Our main goal has been to provide an opportunity for continued faith conversations and connection.

To still be community, learn, and grow together during this time that we cannot physically be in the building.

One of the ways the First Presbyterian Church Children's Ministry has done this is by creating a program called, Family Faith Formation. This program has two parts. The first part is providing families with a family-based curriculum that includes a different focus each month (for example: stewardship, gratitude, etc.). The second part to the program is providing children's families with a Family Partner. A Family Partner is a member of the church that has committed to delivering supplies to their assigned families, being prayer partners and encouragers. We hope that as these two parts of the program come together, they provide a way for families to continue to talk about their faith at home while also providing a connection to other members of the church.

We have 32 children's ministry families participating this fall along with 12 Family Partners. Our hope is that after all of this is over and we can see each other in person again, these relationships will carry on and only help bring our families closer to God and each other. The program started at the beginning of September and we cannot wait to provide updates along the way!

More New Members join FPC by Zoom!

Many of you have already met Leah Boom and Karen Kelley, who were the first new members to join FPC this summer by Zoom. Now please join the Evangelism Committee in welcoming these five additional new members:



Robin Henson joined by transfer from St. Timothy Cumberland PC in Bedford. Robin works in pediatrics, and she and her husband Kevin, who is clergy, have visited FPC both in person and online.



Susan and Norval Kneten joined by reaffirmation of faith. They have been visiting FPC in person and online since relocating to Fort Worth last fall to be closer to family following retirement.



Many of you will remember **Melinda and Bill Smith** who joined by transfer from Faith PC in Aledo, now having moved back to Fort Worth. They were part of the group from FPC that started Faith-Aledo several years ago.

These new members joined during special Session meetings that were convened on Zoom especially for that purpose. Special thanks to ruling elders Barbara Martin and Bob Graham for making these meetings possible.

BE INSPIRED...

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



Book People Book Group are continuing to meet this fall through Zoom. The October 12 book will be *Silent Voices: A Vera Stanhope Mystery* by Ann Cleeves, and the November 9 book is *A Woman of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II* by Sonia Purcell. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please contact Ellen Peck (ecrowl7672@aol.com) or Barbara Reece (reecebk@aol.com).

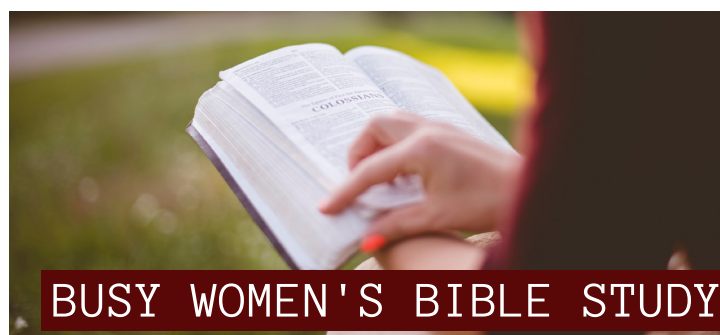


Ringing bells has not ceased just because of the Pandemic. Our adult and youth ringers are participating in virtual handbell ensembles during this time when we cannot come together to play. There are families of 4 or more who are playing and recording themselves from home and also groups where each member records her/his performance and emails it in to be edited into a single video. If you have played bells before and would like to participate in creating a concert of virtual bells at FPC, please contact Rebecca Sawyer (rsawyer@fpcfw.org).



WORSHIP HANDBELLS ARTS MUSIC

WHAM, which stands for Worship, Handbells, Arts and Music, is running smoothly for the Fall with the Younger Children's Choir (age 4 - 1st Grade) participating through short, interactive video lessons and the Older group (2nd - 5th Grades) are participating in three virtual classes. Drawing with Austin Stubblefield is currently in progress. Signing the Hymns with Rebecca Sawyer begins Oct. 18 and Ukelele Classes with Laura Collins begins Nov. 15. Children are welcome to join our groups at any time! Contact Rebecca Sawyer (rsawyer@fpcfw.org) for more info or to sign up.



Bring your lunch, Bible, and desire to learn and fellowship! Busy Women's Bible Study meets at 11:20 a.m. Mondays on Zoom, through November 16. We'll take a winter break, and resume in January. We will use the LifeChange Bible Study on Romans (available on Amazon). This letter to the Romans was written by Paul in 56 AD, before the Gospels. There will be some homework. For more information or to register, contact Lisa Waldron (lisawaldron58@gmail.com or 817.239.3807) or Karen Steffler (kcs249@aol.com or 817.313.5169).



Would you like to serve on an FPC Committee? Know someone who would? The Nominating Committee has begun meeting this month to update the membership of church committees for 2021. Please take a minute to nominate yourself or someone you think is interested in sharing their gifts with the church on a 2021 Committee.

The following is a list of FPC committees: Adult Christian Nurture Committee, Children's Christian Nurture Committee, Youth Christian Nurture Committee, Communications Committee, Congregational Care Committee, Evangelism Committee, Fellowship Committee, Finance Committee, Mission Outreach Committee, Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee, Property Committee, Stewardship Committee, Wellness Committee, and Worship and Music Committee.

You may submit nominations by email to Patty O'Brien (pobrien@fpcfw.org). If you have questions, please contact Nominating Committee Co-Chair, Charlie Gibbs (charlie222@yahoo.com).

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.



Presbyterian Night Shelter Brown Bag Meals Continue: Here's How You Can Help!



First Presbyterian Church continues to provide breakfast and lunch to-go sack meals for guests at the Presbyterian Night Shelter, as well as for workers in PNS' employment program, to help the shelter while they are under construction and during Covid-19 restrictions.

If you are able to help without risking your health, visit fpcfww.org/pnsmeals to sign up to volunteer in the church on Wednesday afternoons (1 - 3 p.m.) and Thursday mornings (8:30 - 10:30 a.m.). Volunteer groups are temperature checked, must wear masks and follow distancing guidelines.

As donations for the bags assembled at home has declined, we will now prepare all breakfast and lunch bags in the church. If you would like to help with donations, we welcome you to drop off the following items between 9:30 - 10 a.m. on Thursday mornings. Drive through the Great Hall covered driveway, where volunteers will retrieve them from your car.

- Granola/protein bars
- Snack sized Fruit cups and applesauce
- Individual sized chips
- Cheese/peanut butter crackers
- 16 oz water bottles

Questions? Visit fpcfww.org/pnsmeals or contact Robyn Michalove (robynm@fpcfww.org).

Read the Bible in 9 Months

You are invited to join an exciting Bible reading program at First Presbyterian. Now in its tenth season, the Reading the Bible in 9 Months program – which has involved over 250 members and friends – 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 the Reading the Bible in 9 Months program includes the opportunity for monthly Zoom check-in meetings from October – May. During these one hour Sunday afternoon gatherings (3 p.m. on the 1st Sunday of the month), participants in the program 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 fpcfw.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@fpcfw.org).

October 01: Psalm 49; Exodus 11-13
October 02: Psalm 50; Exodus 14,15
October 03: Psalm 51; Exodus 16,17
October 04: Psalm 52; Exodus 18,19
October 05: Psalms 53,54; Exodus 20-23
October 06: Psalm 55; Exodus 24-27
October 07: Psalms 56,57; Exodus 28-31
October 08: Psalm 58; Exodus 32-34
October 09: Psalm 59; Exodus 35-40
October 10: Psalm 60; Hebrews 1-3
October 11: Psalms 61,62; Hebrews 4-6
October 12: Psalms 63,64; Hebrews 7-10
October 13: Psalms 65,66; Hebrews 11-13
October 14: Psalm 67; Proverbs 1-3
October 15: Psalm 68; Proverbs 4-7
October 16: Psalm 69; Proverbs 8-10
October 17: Psalms 70,71; Leviticus 1-5
October 18: Psalm 72; Leviticus 6,7
October 19: Psalm 73; Leviticus 8-10
October 20: Psalm 74; Leviticus 11-13
October 21: Psalms 75,76; Leviticus 14-17
October 22: Psalm 77; Leviticus 18-20
October 23: Psalm 78; Leviticus 21,22
October 24: Psalm 79; Leviticus 23-25
October 25: Psalm 80; Leviticus 26,27
October 26: Psalms 81,82; Numbers 1-3
October 27: Psalm 83; Numbers 4-6
October 28: Psalm 84; Numbers 7,8
October 29: Psalm 85; Numbers 9-11
October 30: Psalm 86; Numbers 12-14
October 31: Psalm 87; Numbers 15-17



Care Team Dinner Postponed until 2021

Each Fall, the Congregational Care Committee sponsors an Appreciation Dinner to honor our Care Team volunteers. (Pictured above, the 2019 Dinner.) During this time of fellowship volunteers hear how and what other Care Teams are doing. This year because of COVID-19 we will not have this Celebration Dinner.

Care Teams act as a bridge between church members who need care and church members who want to care for others. Care Teams are organized by zip codes which helps to identify needs and to give support easily.

Congregational Care Committee along with the Pastoral Staff are most appreciative of the work and support of our Care Teams. Now especially during COVID it has even more critical than ever that we stay in contact with our neighbors. We look forward to next year's dinner when we honor our Care Team volunteers.

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 fpcfw.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 worshipping with us, especially during the time when we cannot be together in person.

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).

JOYS & CONCERNS

Following are the joys and concerns shared as September 24, 2020. To respect the privacy of those listed, names are included only when the individuals grant their permission.

Our loving sympathy to...

Jeff and Julie Bledsoe on the death of his mother, Betty Bledsoe, August 7. Other FPC survivors are **Carter Bledsoe** and **Audrey Bledsoe**.

Cornelia Blake on the death of her husband, James Blake, on August 16.

Family and friends of **Dilys Walker**, who died August 25. Her husband, Ben Walker, survives her.

Family and friends of **Lois Sinnett**, who died September 1 in Richmond, Virginia.

Shannon and Greg Hargrove on the death of her father, W. G. McMillan, Jr., on September 3 in Lubbock, Texas.

Family and friends of **Nancy Carter**, who died September 5. She is survived by her husband, **Tim Carter**.

Chris and John Clingman on the death of her father, Winfred Carver, September 7. Other surviving FPC family includes granddaughters, **Grace and Sarah Clingman**.

Marisa Pinon on the death of her mother, Elva Pinon on September 12 in El Paso.

Donna and Dan Moore on the death of her brother-in-law, Larry Miller, on September 16 in Dallas.

Friends and family of **Marjorie Crawford**, who died on September 18. She is survived by her husband, **John Crawford**.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

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

Barbara Reece, Karl Kuipers, Dorothy Kinser, Floyd Kinser, Joanne Sarsgard, Eliot Kerlin, Joyce Brower, Charles Florsheim, Janelle Eklund, 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...

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**), 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...

Sydney and **Sam Patterson** on their wedding on August 29. Sam is the son of **Ed and Jean Patterson**.



SEPTEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

At its September 20 Stated Meeting the Session:

- Was led in an opening devotion and prayer by elder George Pepper.
- Approved the Consent Agenda (included minutes of the August meeting and Congregational Meeting of September 13 approving bylaw changes and election of Elders, Trustee at Large, and Nominating Committee members).
- Heard reports from the Clerk and the Pastors.
- Celebrated virtual kick-off events and virtual gatherings for children, youth, and adults in the last several weeks.
- Heard an update from Stewardship Committee co-chair Janeen Lamkin on the theme (God's Continued Blessings) and communication plans with the congregation. Elders were thanked for those who have already made their 2021 pledge commitment.
- Received the Monthly Update from the Work Group on Reopening and engaged in conversation concerning possibilities of small groups gathering outdoors prior to Phase 2. Session asked the Work Group to continue exploring this possibility.
- Heard an update from the Pastor Nominating Committee sharing that the process continues with conversations with perspective Pastor/Head of Staff candidates.



First Presbyterian Church
1000 Penn Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102

PERIODICALS
POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to
The Penn Street Letter,
1000 Penn Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102

Church Office
Ph: 817.335.1231
Fax: 817.335.5663

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THE penn street LETTER



Zoom Youth Activities: Sunday Youth Group and Wednesday Small Groups

During this virtual season we are in, all youth are invited to participate in Zoom youth activities! Currently on Sundays, Zoom Middle School Youth Group meets at 4 p.m., and Zoom High School Youth Group meets at 5 p.m. (Note: after reevaluating our schedule last month, we have changed meeting times.) On Wednesday evenings, Zoom Middle School Girls Group meets at 7 p.m., and Zoom High School Bible Study meets at 7:30 p.m. While we continue onwards in this unprecedented time, we are working to meet the spiritual needs of our young people as best we can. Please encourage your youth to give it a try! Our Youth Group theme this Fall is "Now. Here. This.," which is all about learning to live in the present moment with God.

For the Zoom info or to join any of these groups, contact Josh (josh@fpcfw.org or 817.335.1231, ext. 251).