

THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

APRIL 2020 | Volume 20, Number 4

FROM YOUR PASTORS...



Dear friends,

This April edition of the *Penn Street Letter* was scheduled to be full of upcoming worship opportunities for Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter. It was scheduled to include a variety of ministry and mission events for the month, including Homeless Connect, Legacy Sunday, Youth Sunday, and so much more. It would have also contained reports on regular ministries from March as well as upcoming summer events and registrations. And then everything changed so quickly last week and in the following days.

As your pastors, we want you to know that you are surrounded by our prayers for you and your family. And not just surrounded, but we are available to you. We can be reached at the church office (817.335.1231) during business hours Monday – Friday. Outside of business hours one of us is always on call and you will be connected to us by calling the church number. If for any reason we come to a point where the church office cannot be opened during business hours, our cell phone numbers will be made available to you. Additionally, we are easily reachable by email. (robynm@fpcfw.org; josh@fpcfw.org; or michaelw@fpcfw.org) Do not hesitate to reach out to us for prayer and conversation during these anxious times.

Many have asked what they can do over these next days and weeks to support our community of faith and outreach. Here are several things to consider.

- **Pray:** Keep the church in your prayers, especially those most vulnerable among us. Keep our community in your prayers, especially health care and government workers who seek to serve us and keep us safe. Keep our nation, and all nations, in your prayers as we meet the challenge of COVID-19 with compassion and mercy.
- Over the next days and weeks, be sure to **regularly check our website (fpcfw.org) and Facebook page** for ongoing updates and announcements.
- **Participate in Facebook Live worship on Sundays at 10 a.m.** while we are unable to gather in person. (The church website includes instructions on how to participate.)
- **Reach out to one another** by phone, email, and text, offering words of encouragement, support, and hope.
- **Small groups and classes** within the church might explore ways to connect through meeting platforms such as Zoom. (Free Zoom services are available to anyone. The church also maintains a Zoom account and will be working to gather groups together as well.)
- **Let the pastors and staff know** if you are wanting to volunteer to deliver food or supplies to the doorsteps of church members needing others to help them as they remain at home. If you are in a vulnerable group (over 60 or with underlying health condition) we encourage you to not put yourself in situations of increased risk to you or others.)
- **Breathe.** And as you do, may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, give you deep, deep peace.

In Christ,

Michael

Robyn

Josh

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

Stay Updated

For the latest information on worship, church activities, and daily updates from the Pastors, visit fpcfw.org/updates or the church's Facebook page (facebook.com/firstpresfw).

DIGITAL Worship

Stay Connected

Participate in Facebook Live worship on Sundays at 10 a.m. while we are unable to gather in person. These short services include interactive elements involving prayers, scripture, reflections, and music. Full details and directions for joining the 10 a.m. worship experience are posted on our website (fpcfw.org/digitalworship), on Facebook (facebook.com/firstpresfw), and in our weekly worship email.



PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Whether or not we took on an intentional spiritual discipline for Lent, we have all learned a new discipline of social distancing imposed upon us as we refrain from public gatherings and close proximity to other people in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. During these past weeks, we have learned new ways of being in the world in what many of you have called a “surreal time,” changing our routines and altering our plans. All have experienced inconveniences in some form or fashion, and many others have endured loss and suffering.

In times of fear and anxiety, our faith is a great gift. This is the time we give witness to the beauty, courage, and hope that we have in God’s grace, in Christ’s mercy and in the Spirit’s companionship. I am so encouraged by all the ways I see you reaching out to one another and caring for those in need. Truly, you are the church, gathered or scattered, who live into your call of “inspiring disciples and engaging the world.”

Even as we embrace the need for social distancing, we are called to draw near spiritually. We do this through our acts of kindness towards the most vulnerable, through our prayers for those who suffer around the globe and for front line medical staff who care for them, and through our reaching out to one another. Social distancing does not mean spiritual distancing; in fact, in these times, we find creative ways to share God’s love and our deep hope.

The apostle Paul offers these timeless words of encouragement. Take a deep breath, and read this from Philippians 4 slowly. Allow the words to soak deeply into your spirit and actions.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Church, be gentle with one another in these days. Find ways to rejoice. Fast from worry and feast on prayer. Focus your attention and intentions on things that are honorable, just, worthy of praise. Church, keep on doing the things that we have learned and received (even at a social distance, if need be), and the God of peace will be with us. We give thanks that God comes near to us in Jesus Christ. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen!

Robyn

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the MAY issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, APRIL 22**. 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 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.



@firstpresfw



@firstpres_fw



@firstpres_fw

PUBLISHER INFO

The Penn Street Letter is published monthly by First Presbyterian Church, 1000 Penn Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-3496. Periodicals postage is paid at Fort Worth, TX and at additional offices.

Editor: Pam Burkholder

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Penn Street Letter at 1000 Penn Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-3496.

JOYS & CONCERNS

Following are the joys and concerns shared as of March 18, 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 **Jane Chapman**, who died March 7. Surviving FPC family members are **Ted Chapman, Beth and Judd Jenkins, Kim and Blake Gore, Matt and Allison Chapman, Nicki Gore, Libby Jenkins, Judd Jenkins, Walker Gore, Tess Jenkins, Mary Jean Jenkins, Abigail Chapman,** and **Julianna Chapman**.

Bill and Nancy Knight on the death of their sister-in-law, **Pat Knight**, on March 4 in Goldthwaite. Other FPC family is **Molly Knight**.

Family and friends of **Bob Brower**, who died March 3. Surviving FPC family is wife, **Joyce Brower** and daughter, **Paula Brower**.

Family and friends of **Elizabeth Johnson Pense**, who died February 29. Surviving FPC family is **Glenn Pense**.

Family and friends of **George Sullivan**, who died February 29. Surviving FPC family includes **Mary Morgan Sullivan, Kevin and Judith Kinser, Morgan and Gigi Sullivan, Jonathan and Kacee Sullivan, Shea Kinser, Logan and Bailey Peresh,** and **Owen Kinser**.

Raymond and Kathi Daniel on the death of his father, **Walter Daniel**, on February 26. Other survivors include **Ann Daniel** and **Richard Daniel**.

Family and friends of **Ann Chappell**, who died February 25. Surviving FPC family includes **David Chappell, Wade and Blair Chappell, Paige and John Pritchett, Caroline Chappell, Lillian Pritchett, John Pritchett,** and **Sutherland Chappell**.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Courtney Stubblefield, Paula Hawpe, Lynda Hamilton, Ann Florsheim, Francisco Menchaca, Jay Dickson, Mary

Farmer, Diane Satterlee, Brent Comstock, Bob Wilson, Jerry Brownlee, and David Nation, who are recovering from surgery or injury.

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...

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...

Daniel and Katie Dodd on the birth of **Lev Thomas** on February 22. Proud FPC family are sisters, **Pate and Davis**, and grandparents, **Danny and Anne Simpson**.

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.



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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 first 30 days of readings are copied below. For a complete schedule, please contact Celeste Falter (cfalter@fpcfw.org) in the church office.

Day 1: Psalm 8; Genesis 1,2
Day 2: Psalms 1-7; Genesis 3,4
Day 3: Psalms 9-11; Genesis 5,6
Day 4: Psalms 12-15; Genesis 7-9
Day 5: Psalms 16, 17; Genesis 10,11
Day 6: Psalm 18; Genesis 12-15
Day 7: Psalm 19; Genesis 16-18
Day 8: Psalms 20, 21; Genesis 19-20
Day 9: Psalm 22; Genesis 21-24
Day 10: Psalms 23, 24; Genesis 25-27
Day 11: Psalms 25, 26; Genesis 28-30
Day 12: Psalms 27, 28; Genesis 31-33
Day 13: Psalms 29, 30; Genesis 34-36
Day 14: Psalms 31, 32; Genesis 37-41
Day 15: Psalms 33, 34; Genesis 42-45

Day 16: Psalms 35, 36; Genesis 46-50
Day 17: Psalm 37; Mark 1-3
Day 18: Psalm 38; Mark 4,5
Day 19: Psalm 39; Mark 6-8
Day 20: Psalm 40; Mark 9,10
Day 21: Psalm 41; Mark 11-13
Day 22: Psalms 42, 43; Mark 14-16
Day 23: Psalm 44, 45; Exodus 1-3
Day 24: Psalm 46, 47; Exodus 4-6
Day 25: Psalm 48; Exodus 7-10
Day 26: Psalm 49; Exodus 11-13
Day 27: Psalm 50; Exodus 14,15
Day 28: Psalm 51; Exodus 16,17
Day 29: Psalm 52; Exodus 18,19
Day 30: Psalms 53, 54; Exodus 20-23