

# THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

JUNE 2018 | Volume 17, Number 6



## How Presbyterians Make Decisions

*This is the second article in a four-part series. Part one appeared in the May 16 Penn Street Online.*

Beginning last week and continuing for three weeks the *Penn Street Letter* and the *Penn Street Online* will feature a series of articles on decision making within our denomination - the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Session

is particularly interested that every member of First Presbyterian Church understands how we make decisions together. This week's article focuses on the Presbyterian principle of making decisions in gathered bodies. The governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) are called councils. The councils of the church include sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. This insistence upon shared decision making comes from two theological observations. First, we are cautious about investing too much authority in a single individual. Second, we believe that the Holy Spirit is vibrantly available to gathered Christians.

Sessions are comprised of elected Ruling Elders and installed ministers (Ministers of Word and Sacrament) of a local congregation. Each congregation sets the size of its session and elects its own Ruling Elders. First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth established the session at between 45-48 Ruling Elders. (The range accounts for the possibility of electing up to three elders under the age of 21.) Ruling Elders are elected by the congregation to three year terms unless elected to fill an unexpired term. Joining the elected Ruling Elders as members of session are the four installed pastors, having been called by the congregation.

Presbyteries are regional units of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Presbyteries vary in size (member congregations and geography). Our presbytery, Grace, is one of the largest in the denomination in both number of congregations and geographical territory. Grace Presbytery includes over 150 congregations of which First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth is one of the largest. The presbytery extends north to the Oklahoma border, south to Salado, east to the Louisiana border, and west to Mineral Wells.

Grace Presbytery meets several times each year. The voting membership of Grace Presbytery includes Ruling Elder Commissioners from each session and all minister members of the presbytery. Sessions elect from one to seven Ruling Elder Commissioners based on church membership. Our session elects four commissioners for each meeting. Additionally our four installed pastors vote as members of Grace Presbytery. In addition to all minister members of Grace Presbytery and Ruling Elder Commissioners elected by Sessions, Ruling Elders serving on presbytery committees are granted voice and vote as are Ruling Elder commissioners to the previous General Assembly and Associate Certified and Certified Christian Educators who are Ruling Elders. This allows Grace Presbytery to work towards the goal of "numerical parity of teaching elders (ministers) and ruling elders." (*Book of Order*

G-3.0301)

Synods are larger regional bodies comprised of presbyteries. Synods are composed of Ruling Elder commissioners and Minister Commissioners from each presbytery in numerical parity. Grace Presbytery is a part of the Synod of the Sun.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the national gathering of our denomination. Meeting every two years, the General Assembly is comprised of Ruling Elder commissioners and Minister Commissioners elected by each presbytery based upon membership. The General Assembly, like the synods, is required to have numerical parity between Ruling Elders and Ministers.

Whether serving on a local session or as a commissioner to a higher governing body, all Ruling Elders and Ministers are collectively referred to as presbyters. As the *Form of Government* states, "Presbyters are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ." (F-3.0204) This is an important -and often misunderstood - role. Presbyters do not serve as elected representatives of a constituency. When presbyters gather they spiritually discern as followers of Jesus Christ. Studying and interpreting scripture, being guided by our *Book of Confessions*, prayer, and dialog lead presbyters to their decisions on how to vote on the business before the church council on which they are serving. "Decisions are reached in councils by majority vote, following an opportunity for discussion and discernment, and a majority shall govern." (F-3.0205)

As can be seen from this brief review of councils and decision making, Presbyterians practice a polity that shares decision making between Ruling Elders and Ministers. Sessions are always comprised of more Ruling Elders than Ministers. Presbyteries seek parity between Ruling Elders and Ministers. (In reality Ruling Elders frequently outnumber Ministers at presbytery meetings.) At synods and the General Assembly numerical parity is mandated. Regardless of whether one is a Ruling elder or a Minister, together these presbyters take seriously their responsibility to prayerfully seek the will of Christ in their decisions. While not all presbyters agree on decisions reached, Presbyterian polity allows for voices to be heard, open and respectful debate, and an affirmation that God's spirit works in and through the community of faith.

Next week's article will examine how the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) - *Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order* - may be amended. A selected item of business for the General Assembly meeting this summer in St. Louis will be illustrative of the processes involved in amending our Constitution.

If you would like further information about Presbyterian decision making, please feel free to speak with your pastors and elders serving on our session.



# PASTORS' LETTER

Dear Friends,

The summer months bring with them different routines and rhythms to our lives, as a church community and as individuals and families. Space for recreation and re-creation come through travel and time off from school and work. Children and youth in our congregation enjoy a variety of camps, conferences, mission trips and Vacation Bible School. Volunteers who may be otherwise unavailable during the school year have opportunities to serve at Community Crossroads and Room in the Inn.

This summer also brings a different change of pace for me as the church has gifted me with a sabbatical for twelve weeks. During this time of renewal, I will concentrate on my final project for my Doctor of Ministry degree from Brite Divinity School. My project centers around the promotion of relational outreach ministry that involves neighborly engagement and transformation at individual, interpersonal, and theological levels as we serve those in material need. And, essential to personal, relational and theological change is reflection and action on systems of inequality inherently present in ministries of mission and outreach, particularly the issues of class and race. Part of my project will be the design of a curriculum that I will use with volunteers at Community Crossroads in the hopes of enhancing self-understanding and interpersonal empathy as we interact with neighbors. This project is deeply grounded in theological understandings of mission which are themselves deeply grounded in the nature and character of God who is with us. I am so grateful to serve in a congregation so deeply committed to compassion and outreach ministries, and my hope is that this concentrated time on my project will deepen and enrich our reflection and action as we serve God together in our community and beyond.

Also, like many of you, this summer I will enjoy time with my family and find ways to nurture my faith. What a gift this sabbatical will be. Please know of my gratitude for such an opportunity. It's not a gift deserved, for then it would cease to be a gift, but it is a gift much appreciated. May each of us find spaces for renewal that enrich our lives together in our continued ministry together.

God be with you,

*Robyn*

## SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the JULY issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, June 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@fpcf.wa](mailto:pamb@fpcf.wa) or bring by the church office.

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## FOLLOW US

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## Summer Music at FPC

Throughout the summer the 11 a.m. service of worship will enjoy the music ministry of the Summer Choir and selected soloists and ensembles. Comprised of singers from the Chancel and Fellowship Choirs, as well as other interested high school and adult singers, the Summer Choir sings a variety of genres June 3 – July 15. From July 22 – August 12, outstanding soloists from the Chancel Choir will offer special music each week. A string quartet from the Mimir Festival will also offer their musical gifts during worship on July 8.

This summer will also include several Sundays where the special music, the congregational hymns, and the prelude and postlude will be themed around certain periods and styles of music. Upcoming Penn Street Online articles will highlight those Sundays in advance. Plans include Sundays devoted to Baroque music, American music, Gospel music, Classical music, Global music, Scottish music, and more! You won't want to miss worship this summer at 11!

For more information about summer music at FPC, contact Ahreum Han Congdon (Director of Music) in the church office. For more information about the Summer Choir, contact Michael Waschevski (Associate Pastor).

# SANCTUARY RENOVATION UPDATES IN PICTURES

*Under Construction, Overwhelmed by Blessing*

The Sanctuary Renovation project has been underway since early April. Here are some photos of the progress thus far. We give thanks for those working hard on this exciting renovation!



# BE INSPIRED...

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

## PW Summer Treat

**Tuesday, June 26 from 6-8 p.m.**

**La Puertita at Joe T. Garcia's**

The annual Summer Treat is a fun-filled dinner gathering all women from FPC at a local restaurant. This year, we will enjoy an enchilada dinner in a private dining room at Joe T. Garcia's. The menu will include cheese nacho appetizer, two cheese enchiladas, rice, beans, guacamole, two beef tacos, tortillas, chips and salsa. Cash bar available as well. RSVP by June 18 with check made out to PW to Celeste Falter in the church office. Questions? Contact Barbara Reece at reecebk@aol.com

## FPC Summer Choir

From June 3 – July 15 the Summer Choir provides leadership for the 11 a.m. Sunday worship service. Comprised of singers from both the Chancel Choir and Fellowship Choir, new singers (high school – adult) are welcome as well!

- Summer Choir is a great opportunity to give singing in choir a try!
- Summer Choir is a great opportunity for those unable to do so doing the school year!
- Summer Choir sings music that allows for people to sing as their schedules allow.

Rehearsals are held on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the Choir Room (218). Childcare is available. Additionally the Summer Choir rehearses Sunday mornings from 10 – 10:30 a.m. To sign up for Summer Choir, or to receive more information, please contact Michael Waschevski in the church office. (817.335.1231; michaelw@fpcf.org)

## Boomers Concert in the Garden

The Boomers Fellowship group will meet up for Concerts in the Garden: Music of the Rolling Stones at the Botanic Garden on Friday, June 22. Enjoy table seating and dinner from East Hampton Sandwich Shop. Learn more at [www.fpcf.org/boomers](http://www.fpcf.org/boomers).

## Faith & Film: Summer Church School Series

Throughout the summer we will engage in topics like theology of pacifism and just war using clips from "Sergeant York" and "Heartbreak Ridge," conversations with director and actor Ed Lowry, film discussions with TCU's Dr. Darren Middleton, and more. Join us each Sunday beginning June 3 in FPC Room 235.

## Summer Church School Offering: The Spiritual Direction of the Enneagram

So, you know your number. Now what? Or maybe you haven't yet been exposed to the Enneagram, an ancient tool for enriching your life and deepening your relationships with God and with others. Either way, this class is for you. Using Sandra Maitre's book, *The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram*, we will explore how the universal process of human development creates the ego-self necessary for our survival and, at the same time, necessarily separates us from the union with God in which we are born. We will learn how the Enneagram maps this trajectory and how it also leads us back to that union. Borrowing from David Daniels' book, *The Essential Enneagram*, we will learn general practices and principles for spiritual growth and have a chance to practice some of these in class. If this sounds intriguing, please join Shirley Chambliss, Margaret Sudderth, and Carol Toombs on June 3 in Room 236 as we undertake this spiritual journey together.

## ADULT SUMMER CHURCH SCHOOL

During the summer, the Adult Christian Nurture Committee offers a variety of intergenerational adult Church School classes. The course offerings this summer include:

### Film Series

June 3 – August 19, Room 235

Dr. Steve Brotherton and Eric Varnon  
(For a more in-depth look at this class, see article at right.)

### Book Study: The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram

June 3 – July 15, Room 236

Shirley Chambliss,  
Margaret Sudderth, Carol Toombs  
(For a more in-depth look at this class, see article at right.)

### General Assembly 2018

June 3 – June 24, Room 237

Revs. Karl Travis and  
Michael Waschevski

### Bible Study: Genesis

July 1 – August 19, Room 237

Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski

For more information about the Summer Adult Classes, please contact Michael Waschevski in the church office. (817.335.1231; michaelw@fpcf.org)

## Save the Date: Fall Youth Music Retreat

Save the Date Fall Youth Music Retreat  
September 7-9 at Glen Lakes Retreat  
Center in Glen Rose, Texas. Watch for  
further details.

# ENGAGE THE WORLD...

*Below are some ways you are invited to serve others through First Presbyterian Church mission and outreach efforts in the coming weeks.*

## Community Crossroads Volunteer Needs

### **Be a Shepherd at WOW!**

The Worship on Wednesday (WOW!) community seeks adults to serve as shepherds for the children's classes (K-4th grade) on Wednesday nights from 6:30-7:30 pm.

A class shepherd:

- Is a consistent presence by being present at least two Wednesdays a month during class time.
- Assists the children's class teacher as needed and is focused on building relationships between the children and assisting children with special needs who need an adult buddy to help them engage and focus.
- If available, may serve as an adult sponsor so that WOW! children can participate in special trips and events such as serving at Downtown Rehab and attending Kidquake in the spring.

### **Teachers for Children and Youth**

We are looking for teachers for children and youth for the 2018-19 year.

### **Can You Fill In? Floating Volunteers**

Are you willing to volunteer occasionally? Community Crossroads is forming a list of "Floating Volunteers" who would be called when the regularly dedicated volunteers need someone to "fill in" when they need to be away on holiday or during illness. Let Dori Davis (ddavis@fpcf.org) know if you can be available with little or no notice to "stand in" when needed.

### **The Listening Post**

Do you enjoy listening to others and have the gift of being that shoulder or ear when someone needs it? Then you would be perfect as a CC Listening Post volunteer. The listening post volunteer just listens, empathizes, and allows the person to talk through their feelings. Contact Dori at ddavis@fpcf.org to volunteer.

*If you are interested in any of these opportunities or have more questions, contact Dori Davis (ddavis@fpcf.org).*

## Reflections on our Cuba Partnership Pilgrimage



Six church members (Jacqueline Bender, Grant Garlington, Russell and Sarah Haddock, Cheryl Mireles, and Robyn Michalove) traveled to Cuba for seven days in mid-April to renew the partnership between our congregation and three sister Presbyterian-Reformed congregations in the Presbytery of Matanzas in western Cuba. The purpose of the partnership is to affirm and build on the unity of the Presbyterian Church under Jesus Christ through a mutual exchange of people, Christian education and Bible study, cultural understanding and, at times, financial support. Presbyterians have a historic connection to the church in Cuba, and over 50 US Presbyterian congregations and presbyteries have partnerships with Cuban congregations. This was our third trip to Cuba in our current partnership and on this trip our church members visited the seminary in Matanzas and met with eight Presbyterian seminarians as well as the two PC(USA) mission coworkers that our congregational financially supports. Here's a piece of a reflection from trip participant, Sarah Haddock:

*"In my experience the Presbyterian community in Cuba celebrate life joyfully, fully engaged in the moment. They are generous and full of hospitality. They do not complain about their circumstances, struggles and oppression. For them it is a way of life and they roll with it. They have a spirit that is contagious. There is a zest to pursue their relationship with Jesus Christ and this seems pure and untainted by the modern pressure of materialism...We may have left 11 bags of supplies in Cuba and came home with half-filled bags, but I know truly what I came home with will forever have changed me and it has so much more value than what was left behind."*



## There's still time to Register for these Camps!

Complete details and registration forms can be found in brochures at church and at [FPCFW.ORG/SUMMER-CAMPS](http://FPCFW.ORG/SUMMER-CAMPS)

### SUMMER FUN 1: June 18 - 22

9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Theme: *Out of the Box*

For Ages 2 (by 9-1-17) through Entering Kindergarten

During this fun week, pre-schoolers will use boxes of all shapes and sizes to explore their imagination!

### SUMMER FUN 2: July 23 - 27

9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Theme: *Out of This World!*

For Ages 2 (by 9-1-17) through Entering Kindergarten

Summer Fun camps give pre-schoolers the chance to learn hands on about the world around them. This week we'll learn about outer space.

### PRE-K MUSIC & ART CAMP: July 9 - 13

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Theme: *Baby Beluga* (by Raffi/arr. Mark Brymer)

For Ages 4 through Entering 1st Graders

Children will explore song, dance, drums, bells and bars, and hone their visual arts skills with some of the finest teachers in North Texas. Come watch a performance at the end of camp!

### ELEMENTARY MUSIC & ART CAMP: July 23 - 27

9 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Theme: *It's a Hit!* (musical by John Jacobson/John Higgins)

For Entering 2nd through 6th Graders

Children will explore song, dance, drums, bells and bars, and hone their visual arts skills with some of the finest teachers in North Texas. Come watch a performance at the end of camp!

## Book People Book Club



Book People will not meet in June.

On July 9 the book will be *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. This story, originally published in 2009, is set on the Isle of Guernsey during the German occupation of the island during World War II. A movie based on the novel is coming out soon. This is a great summer read.

For information about Book People please contact Elizabeth Johnson Pense at [ejpense@me.com](mailto:ejpense@me.com).

## Sunday Shuttle Drivers Needed

The FPC golf-cart shuttle provides convenient transportation from Trinity Terrace and the various parking lots to church entrances. More drivers are needed for this important ministry.

If you can drive for one of the shifts (7:35 a.m. to 10 a.m. or 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.) please contact coordinator Keith Pugh at [w5iu@swbell.net](mailto:w5iu@swbell.net) or "flag down" a shuttle driver on Sunday.

Qualifications are minimal and drivers usually serve one shift a month.



# CALENDAR

Below are a few highlighted events in June.

More at [fpcf.org/calendar](http://fpcf.org/calendar).

## SUNDAYS IN JUNE

- 8 a.m. Worship in Chapel
- 9 a.m. Worship in Great Hall
- 10 a.m. Summer Adult Church School
- 10 a.m. Summer Choir Rehearsal
- 11 a.m. Worship in Great Hall

## WEDNESDAYS IN JUNE

- 5:30 p.m. Worship On Wednesdays (+ dinner, classes) at Community Crossroads
- 6:30 p.m. Summer Choir Rehearsal

## SATURDAY, JUNE 2

- 7:30 a.m. Team FPC participates in Joe's Run

## SATURDAY, JUNE 9

- 3-6 p.m. Young Family Gathering

## SUNDAY, JUNE 10

- All Day SOS Shoes on Sunday (donations collected)

## SUNDAY, JUNE 10 - SATURDAY, JUNE 16

- Hurricane Harvey Relief Youth Mission Trip

## SUNDAY, JUNE 17

- All Day Peanut Butter Sunday (donations collected)
- 6:30 p.m. Taize Worship in Chapel

## SUNDAY, JUNE 17-FRIDAY, JUNE 22

- Eco Camp in Little Rock, AR

## MONDAY, JUNE 18-FRIDAY, JUNE 22

- 9:30 a.m. Summer Fun 1

## FRIDAY, JUNE 22

- 7 p.m. Boomers @ Concerts in the Garden

## SUNDAY, JUNE 24-FRIDAY, JUNE 29

- Youth Celebration at Mo-Ranch

## MONDAY, JUNE 25-THURSDAY, JUNE 28

- 9 a.m. Vacation Bible School

## TUESDAY, JUNE 26

- 6-8 p.m. PW Summer Treat at Joe T. Garcia's

# JOYS & CONCERNS

Following are the joys and concerns shared as of May 17, 2018 (due to printing deadlines). 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 **Willis Brown**, who died May 12.

Family and friends of **Dwight Mason**, who died May 12.

Surviving FPC family: wife, **Beverly Mason**.

**Steve and Laura Stackhouse** on the death of her father, William Ogden, Jr., on May 11 in Minnesota. Other surviving FPC family: grandchildren, **Ellie Stackhouse** and **Robbie Stackhouse**.

Family and friends of **Cyndy Howard**, who died May 10.

Surviving FPC family: mother, **Irene Howard**; and sister, **Beverly Howard**.

Family and friends of **Leland Rex**, who died May 8, Surviving FPC family: daughter, **Marian Hood**.

Family and friends of **Ellen Jane Walton**, who died May 4.

Surviving FPC family includes daughter, **Diane Stavens**.

**Dick Novak** on the death of his wife, Judith Novak, on April 28.

**Barbara Winkler** on the death of her mother, Lourania Price, on April 24 in the San Francisco Bay area. Other surviving FPC family: granddaughter and husband, **Tami and Mike Ramsey**; and grandsons, **Ryan Ramsey** and **Blake Ramsey**.

**Barry and Evie Richardson** on the death of his mother, Jeanene Claire Richardson, on April 17 in Burleson. Other surviving FPC family: Ryan and **Sarah Barrera**, granddaughter and her husband; and **Mathew Richardson**, grandson.

Family and friends of **Nona Cobden**, who died on April 19.

**Jane and Dan Sykes** on the death of her mother, Frances Hoch, on March 18 and her uncle, Tom Hoch on April 9. Other surviving FPC family: **Elizabeth Sykes Johnston**.

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

**Judy Gasch**, who is recovering from surgery or injury.

**Roger Parsons, Jane Watson, Rush Hart, Marilyn Wilson, Vera Kendall, Phyllis Propes, Emma Coley, Marjorie Lewis, Corinna Nation, Lisa Shiner, Jacquitta White, Marge Shiner, Elizabeth Bean, Frances Blake, Nancy Nelson, and Dalia Scott**, who are dealing with illness or undergoing treatment.

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

Bill (brother of **Marilyn Love**), Glenda Burger (sister of **Vance Laminack**), John DeMore (son-in-law of **June Sprott**), Lisa Koenig (niece of **Clark Williams**), Kathy Kline (**Maxine Kruse's** daughter), Marty Kinard (**Larry and Bettye Kinard's** daughter-in-law), 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**.



# THE penn street LETTER

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

## CELEBRATING LEGACY SUNDAY



On Sunday, April 8, First Presbyterian Church honored and gave thanks to those who've been members for 50+ years. We pray for all the many years you, our Legacy Members, have spent worshipping God in this church. We pray for your continued health, for the blessings and grace of God upon you and your family, and for the ministry you have shared as a part of this congregation. For those who have been members for at least 50 years, we have a tradition of gifting a Legacy Member pin for you to wear. Come to the display case down the hall from the church office to see photos of some of our Legacy Members.

*"Well done, good and faithful servant!" - Matthew 25.23*