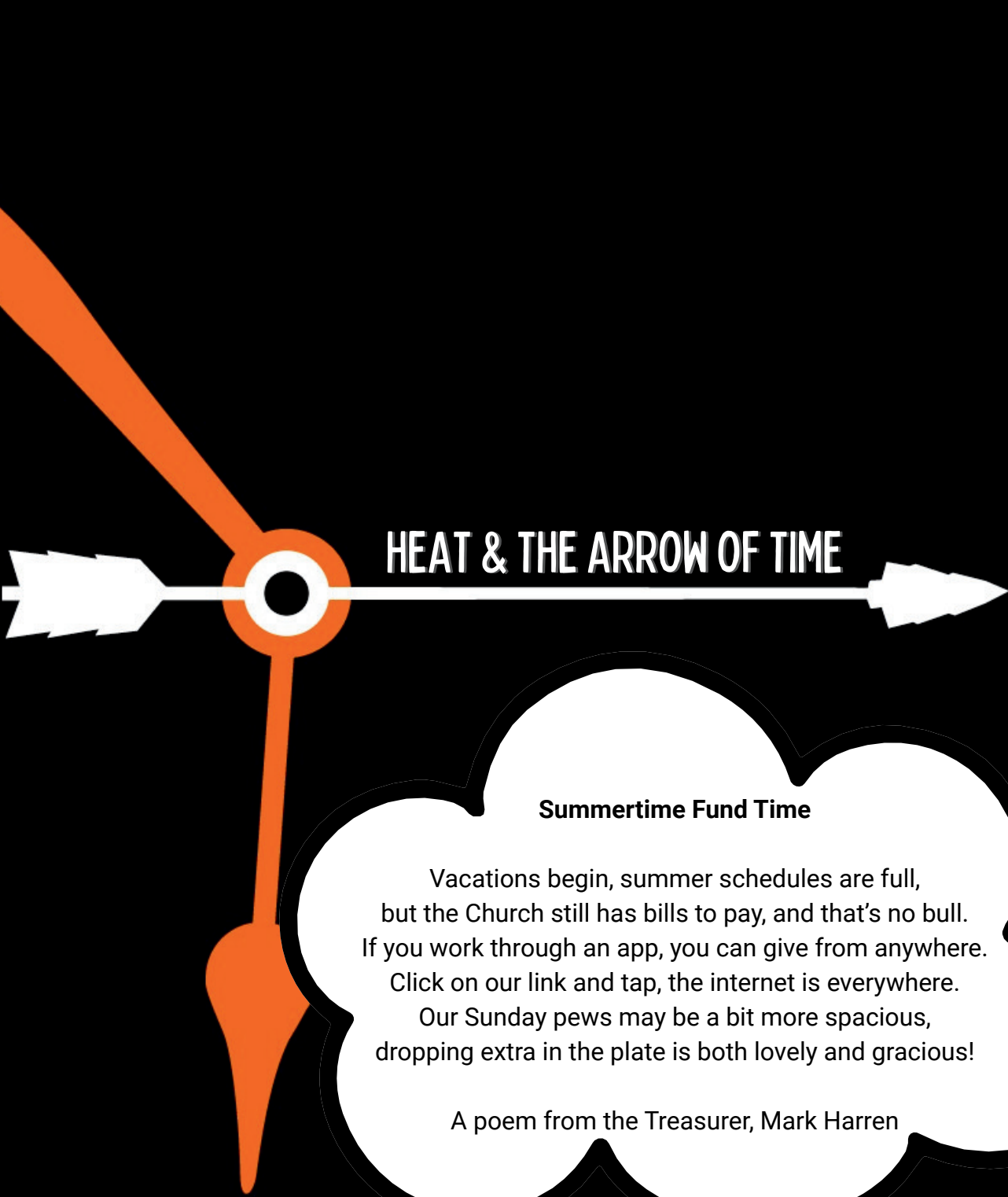


THE JULY TOWER



HEAT & THE ARROW OF TIME

Summertime Fund Time

Vacations begin, summer schedules are full,
but the Church still has bills to pay, and that's no bull.
If you work through an app, you can give from anywhere.
Click on our link and tap, the internet is everywhere.
Our Sunday pews may be a bit more spacious,
dropping extra in the plate is both lovely and gracious!

A poem from the Treasurer, Mark Harren

LETTER FROM A PASTOR

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IN THE HEAT OF IT

With July, we cross the halfway point of the year. We are at a natural place to count time, assessing the six months behind us and the six more that lie ahead. Some circumstances seem to drag on indefinitely, and others we perceive as flying by too quickly. Based on averages, July is also historically the hottest month of the year in Texas. Our calendars and our thermostats testify to the fact of July: We are in the heat of it!

I recently read an article by the Paris-based particle physicist and researcher, Bertrand Rousseau, entitled “Temperature and the Arrow of Time: Exploring the Connection Between Heat and Entropy.” As it turns out, and as far as I understand it (maybe not that far!), heat has a lot to do with the ways we measure and perceive the linear progression of time.

Rousseau explains that when an energy transfer takes place between two systems, “heat naturally flows from the higher temperature system to the lower one, striving towards thermal equilibrium.” For example, a hot cup of coffee gradually cools when it loses heat to the surrounding environment until reaching room temperature.

This pattern of heat transfer relates to the perception and measurement of time because it is unidirectional. Like many (although not all) of the ways we perceive and measure time, heat always flows spontaneously in one direction, from hotter to colder regions of matter. Apparently, this has something to do with entropy and the second law of thermodynamics.

A bit more accessible to me, Rousseau goes on to explain the way heat relates to our psychological perception of time. He writes that “higher temperatures are commonly associated with discomfort and irritability, which can lead to an experience where time seems to drag on.” Also, “studies indicate that extreme temperatures can hinder mental processes, leading to a more sluggish perception of time.” Rousseau illustrates that heat and the understanding of time are interconnected on multiple levels.

Reflecting Rousseau’s report on psychological experiences of heat, there is a common perception that summer is a slower time of year. The staff, session, and committees at First Pres Waco would beg to differ. Even while Wednesday night programming takes a pause, the First Pres Community maintains its forward motion. Adult formation, Children and Youth programming, Congregational Life events, Service Saturdays, and much more... it’s all in full swing.

It is possible to maintain our equilibrium throughout the year because of the ways God equips each of you to transfer energy to our system—through leadership, encouragement, faithful presence, and generous love. In seasons that can feel sluggish, you become conduits of grace, bearing one another’s burdens and sustaining the life we share in Christ. The movement of God’s Spirit among us is not bound by the drag of heat or the limits of our perception of time; it is steady, creative, and life-giving. Whether these days feel long or fleeting, may we trust that God’s energy moves us forward.

Taylor Holleyman
Director of Congregational Life

Bertand Rousseau’s article available at:



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



SUMMER CELEBRATION

Thank you to everyone who joined the Summer Celebration at Bledsoe-Miller Park on June 18th. We enjoyed the new STEAM Center playground, Kona Ice, and time together. It is always a delight to enjoy fellowship and fun with the First Pres family!



LIVER & ONIONS

D.J. King is hosting the 4th annual Liver & Onions extravaganza on July 23, 6 p.m., at George's in Hewitt. Whether you hope to enjoy Liver & Onions or just want to come for another dish and community, we hope to see you there! Please register so we can let them know how many people will be in attendance, and how many plates of Liver & Onions to be prepared to serve up!



POOL PARTY!

Families and young adults (or anyone feeling young at heart!) are invited to the DuPuy's home (7227 Westover Rd, 76710), Sunday, August 29th, 4-6p.m. BYO - lawn chair, towel, sunscreen, and drinks! Snacks to share are welcome. We hope to see you there!



BREAKFAST AT WIMBLEDON

Our next congregational life event is July 11th at 10a.m. The Joyners are hosting Breakfast at Wimbledon (400 Ocampo Ct, 76708). We will watch some tennis while enjoying yard games and a light brunch. It promises to be fun for the whole family. Wear your sportiest white if you are feeling festive!

CHURCH RETREAT

Church Retreat sign-ups are live! We hope you can join us at Mo-Ranch, November 6-8. We are excited to have Austin Dickson join us as our guest speaker. Austin is the CEO of the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country, the organization that has led the Rebuild Kerr efforts following last year's devastating floods. We'll look forward to time together in the Hill Country this November. SIGN-UPS close on August 6th!



MO-RANCH

JULY CALENDAR

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Monday, July 1

Diaconate Meeting - Holiday

Sunday, July 5 - Communion Sunday

Worship, 8:30a.m. - Sanctuary & Zoom

Christian Formation, 9:15a.m.

Worship, 10:30a.m. - Sanctuary & Zoom

Junior High Jubilee (July 5 - July 9)

Friday, July 10

Reel Spirituality, 6p.m. - Pinewood

Saturday, July 11

Breakfast at Wimbledon, 10a.m. (Joyners Home)

Sunday, July 12

Worship, 8:30a.m. - Sanctuary & Zoom

Christian Formation, 9:15a.m.

Worship, 10:30a.m. - Sanctuary & Zoom

Our Hybrid House, 5p.m. - Zoom

Monday, July 13

Outreach Meeting, 5:30p.m. - Zoom

Tuesday, July 14

Faith on Tap, 6p.m. - Slow Rise in Woodway

Wednesday, July 15

Forman Fund Committee Meeting, 12p.m. - Zoom

Choir Rehearsal, 7p.m.

Thursday, July 16

Finance Committee Meeting, 12p.m. - Zoom

Friday July 17

Men's Breakfast, 7:30a.m. - Fellowship Hall

Sunday, July 19 - Sudderth Sunday

Worship, 8:30a.m. - Sanctuary & Zoom

Christian Formation, 9:15a.m.

Worship, 10:30a.m. - Sanctuary & Zoom

Monday, July 20

Character Camp, 8:30a.m. (July 20 - July 24)

Session Meeting - Holiday

Tuesday, July 21

Personnel Committee, 1p.m. - 4p.m.

Wednesday, July 22

Facilities Committee Meeting, 12p.m. - Hybrid

Thursday, July 23

4th Annual Liver & Onions Extravaganza, 6p.m. - George's Hewitt

Saturday, July 25

Blood Drive, 9a.m. - Franklin Parking Lot

Sunday, July 26

Worship, 8:30a.m. - Sanctuary & Zoom

Christian Formation, 9:15a.m.

Worship, 10:30a.m. - Sanctuary & Zoom

Monday, July 27

Worship Committee Meeting, 2p.m. - Zoom

Power of the Pen Meeting, 7p.m. - Zoom

Tuesday, July 28

Christian Formation Committee & YAB, 5:30p.m. - Zoom

First Pres Reading Group, 6:30p.m. - Lott's Home

Celebration of Baptism

Wren Ochoa - June 21, 2026

Daughter of Madison & Jake Ochoa



Birthdays and Anniversaries!

2 Lyn & George Petersen, Anita & James Karney **3** Steve Dalton, Charlie Olson **4** Coretta Pittman, Lisa & Tom Lacy **5** Gayle Lacy, Laura Shank **6** Susan Johnsen & David Young **7** Gale Kannwischer, Eve Riley, Laura Munn & Sondra Dubowsky **10** Karenn Malavanti, Nancy & Bob Grayson, Eve & Joe Riley, Sherry & Bob Cragen **11** Rob Bradfield **13** Lauren Plaskett, Sondra Dubowsky **14** Sue Patrick, Carr DuPuy, Craig Clarkson **15** Ben Lacy, Jonas Redmer **16** Sarah Lieber **17** Jimmy Cook, Bob Cragen **18** Jim Maxwell **19** Walter Lacy, Mike McPhee, Jamie Jackson **20** Elinor Davis **21** Sam Ferretter **22** Marilyn George, Krystal Goodman, Meredith & Greg Palm **23** H.W. Wright, Sarah Ochel, Charlotte Ochel, Byntlie Montoya **24** Gayla Smith **26** Marsha Alvarado, Lindsay Durham, Larry LeFevre, Marsha Giles, Marla & Mark Jaynes **29** Sherry Cragen, Kay & Charles Metz **31** Sarah Lacy, Natalie Risinger

OUTREACH

SERVICE SATURDAY

We had a strong crew volunteer with Waco Habitat for Humanity on June 13th. Habitat is one of our Outreach Partners, and we are always delighted to serve with them. We spent the morning laying a protective layer over the flooring in a home that will bless a Central Texas family. Thanks for all the ways you contribute to help build our community.



BLOOD DRIVE

We will host our next blood drive with Carter BloodCare on Saturday, July 25 from 9a.m.-1p.m. The BloodCare Bus will be in the Franklin Parking lot to receive donations. Use the QR code to reserve your spot! Help us reach our goal of 15 pints.



FIRST PRES CAREGIVERS... CAREGIVING - JERRY BARRETT

There are many kinds of caregiving. My first thought about caregiving has always been a person-to-person experience, and that has been the focus of this column through the years. We are blessed with the plethora of examples of caregiving at First Pres in so many different important ways. Our focus this month on First Pres caregiving highlights our building, the grand old dame of First Presbyterian, and how caring for her makes a difference, benefitting all of us. We are blessed as a congregation with so many who provide regular loving care to our building and who have nurtured and tended to her through our history.

I recently visited with Jerry Barrett, a long-term steward of our collective home of worship. I caught up with Jerry on a Saturday morning as he was getting his car's oil changed. I had heard from several First Pres folks about Jerry's long-term work on the things that constitute our building. Jerry has been part of First Pres most of his life, beginning as a child when he learned the building needs and how to meet them, working alongside his dad. He knows the building's history, from simple repairs to major remodeling projects; the complexity of the rafters to kitchen shelving and the crawl spaces below the floors.

Jerry's caregiving for the church started by following the elder Mr. Barrett around the church, making repairs. His father owned a lumber yard and resourced the church both with materials and labor.

CAREGIVING CONTINUED

Jerry confessed that he rarely charged the church for labor, as his work at the church was his labor of love. Through the years, he has accumulated many special stories about church projects that both challenged and provided satisfaction and joy. He learned from his dad as they “did stuff all over the church,” projects they completed and some they redid years later. He recalled restoring the choir chancel several times during his life at the church. The first restoration of the choir chancel was when he was 14 and working with his dad. They changed out the carpentry and the trim, and years later, the second remodeling of the choir chancel was bigger, including carpeting, changing some carpentry, and installing new trim. He recalled a leather door to a stairwell that provided access to choir members who would appear at a secret door. Later, that was closed off, and choir members began entering the sanctuary through the Narthex doors and processing down the middle aisle. A secret door...intriguing First Pres history!

Another remodel in the 1970s included new furniture and putting old pieces into the boiler room. Jerry also talked about a bell at the top of the stairwell and about a large window at the front of the church that included a picture of a car. He and his Dad removed all of the trim and secured the window with hooks and belts. Part of that work included preserving two square nails circa 1911. After they had secured it and completed the restoration, the painting was and is partially held in place with those 1911 square nails! Another project involved the front door's loss of integrity, with rot setting in. They replaced the rotting wood and, in the process, provided a smaller temporary door available in case needed. That door still has trim from 60 years ago, another preservation of memory.

When Jerry's father retired, Jerry was able to purchase the lumber yard business. He shared his learning to be frugal through the years and mentioned specifically Mrs. Rountree, who taught him how to be frugal and save. She also taught him to buy the best materials even when they were more expensive because they would last longer and save money in the end. That philosophy has made a difference in Jerry's life, both for the church and for his personal commitment to excellence, another strong example of stewardship.

Jerry has kept “bits and pieces” of the church through the years. Some years ago, there was a leak on the second floor. It was hard to fund the labor to fix it, and Jerry did what he could to repair the floor. Also, someone in the community had fired a gun in the air near the church, and the bullet had knocked a hole in the roof of the church. Jerry was able to get on the roof, find the bullet hole, and remove it, and patch the roof. The rumor is he may still have that bullet. Another of the items Jerry has kept through the years are samples of growth rings on trees on the church property and on some lumber. He mentioned that some of the lumber in the Rotan Kellum building includes lumber from a tree dated to 1650. Jerry provided a sample of that to the Strecker Museum at Baylor. And through the years, he has kept bits and pieces, i.e., samples of the wood and the work representing upkeep at the church. These memory samples are part of our history and a record of the caregiving demonstrated in structural maintenance, repairs, and restoration.

In another story, Jerry mentioned that the church bell “never worked” when he was growing up. Several years before Pastor Jimmy left the church, he asked Jerry to get the bell to work. He discovered that an “arm of the bell” was too long, hitting the wall, and preventing the ringing. Further, the square nuts that held the bell in place were from 1910. Jerry shortened the bar, rewelded the connections, shortened the range, and was the first one to ring the bell in many years. There is a sign on the wall: “Be easy with ringing the bell!” The key is to pull the rope gently. He shared warmly, “When I am ushering, a woman usher rings the bell three times.” In another special story, Jerry discussed the Fellowship Hall remodel when he replaced the shelving in the closets. He was able, with the “remains” of lumber, to make approximately a dozen stools, which were the delight of a number of the women of the church. Jerry also gave one to his sister, who enjoyed it until she moved, and he now has that one. He is planning to repaint it and give it to a previous teacher of his.

There are all kinds of caregiving, and I know there are many of you who are caregivers of the church. I would love to hear your stories.

Helen Wilson Harris & Jerry Barrett

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

CHARACTER CAMP

Join us for the adventure of Character Camp, here at FPC, July 20-24. Children ages PreK – 4th grade will venture through a different core Bible story each day that will feature a different character. They will enjoy games and activities, musical fun, and connection with friends. To register a child, or adults and youth who would like to help volunteer, scan the QR code. For more information or questions, you may contact Malorie Montoya: dcf@firstpreswaco.org

For more information,
to register a child, or
register to help as a
volunteer, scan the QR
code!



CHILDREN AND YOUTH FORMATION

Summer has been off to a great, energetic start for children and youth! July continues another fun month exploring “Character in Characters.”

- July 5: Zacchaeus and Generosity
- July 12: Esther and Bravery
- July 19: David and Courage
- July 26: Peter and Humility

JUNIOR HIGH JUBILEE

July 5-9, a group of 3 middle schoolers will be traveling down to Mo-Ranch for Junior High Jubilee. The theme for the week is “Belonging as Me and We.” They will spend the week worshipping, connecting with friends, spending time outdoors, and, of course, doing energizers! A big thank you to Jen Ferretter for volunteering to be with the group during the week!



FINDING OUR PLACE

Thank you to everyone who has participated in our adult formation series, “Finding Our Place.” We have had a wonderful engagement in May and June exploring experiences of displacement in the Old Testament and learning from Rev. Ted Foote about Presbyterian identity in American religious cultures. We look forward to continuing this series in July. Join us each week at 9:15 and mark your calendars for our forthcoming guest speakers:

- July 5th: Leaders from the Heart of Texas Network for Immigrant Rights
- July 26th: Rev. Karen Zimmerman, Open Table Director
- August 16th: Baylor Center for Disability and Flourishing



The Tower
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(254) 752-1665
www.firstpreswaco.org

Office Hours
Monday – Friday
9 A.M. – 12 P.M. & 1 P.M. – 4 P.M.



Want to stay up-to-date with what's going on at First Pres from week to week? Sign up to receive "Ministry on Monday," our weekly newsletter. Each Monday afternoon, you'll receive a note from Leslie, or Taylor as well as updates about some events that are quickly approaching. Sign up using the QR code above!

FIRST PRES WORK FLOW

