

THE APRIL TOWER



The Stone was Rolled Away So We Could See the Miracle
Lois Davis, 2023

Easter as a Rolling Stone (riffing off Dylan)

How does it feel?
Aw, how does it feel—
To be a seed once sown,
Now rising up toward home?

Like a complete unknown,
Rolling from the stone.



LETTER FROM A PASTOR

Rolling the Stone

Easter is hallmarked by the rolling of the stone. This act is often understood as a freedom from being trapped by ideas of death and perishing. Instead, we are open to the possibility of a life that continues to move forward, inspired by a moment-by-moment salvation in the life of Christ.

Another angle on the rolling of the stone is to consider the earthiness of the stone itself. You might have had a hot stone massage, used a gua sha tool on your face, or simply held a cool natural stone in your hands. These are moments of mineral exchange between the earth and the human being—a gentle mineralization, exfoliation, and adjustment in our pH balance.

Many say that the naturally occurring stone of the tombs in Jerusalem was limestone. In terms of mineral exchange, limestone is calcium. It is used in everything from toothpaste and supplements to water purification and reducing acidity in agriculture.

Additionally, limestone supports our nervous system by providing the essential calcium needed for nerve impulse transmission and muscle contraction.

Quite wonderfully, limestone is easily available right here in Waco. Perhaps an easy Easter discipline in these last weeks of Lent is to pick up a piece of limestone and roll it around in your hand. Offer prayers that honor freedom, the essential minerals of our health, and the way that rolling the stone released minerals that may have dusted onto the hands of disciples who needed to "keep their nerve" in the days to come.

Looking forward to a thoughtful roll into Easter 2026.

Faithfully, Leslie

APRIL CALENDAR

Thursday, April 2

6:00p.m. Maundy Thursday Service

Friday, April 3

6:00p.m. Good Friday Service

Sunday, April 5 – Easter Sunday

8:30a.m. Early Service

9:15a.m. Easter Breakfast

10:30a.m. Morning Worship

Monday, April 6

5:30p.m. Diaconate Meeting – Hybrid

Tuesday, April 7

5:30p.m. Congregational Life Meeting – Hybrid

Thursday, April 9

9:00a.m. Personnel Committee Meeting – Zoom

Friday, April 10

6:00p.m. Reel Spirituality – Pinewood

Sunday, April 12

8:30a.m. Early Service

9:15a.m. Sunday School for All Ages

10:30a.m. Morning Worship

5:00p.m. Our Hybrid House – Zoom

Monday, April 13

1:00p.m. Presbyterian Women (Hybrid)

Tuesday, April 14

6:00 Faith on Tap – Woodway Slowrise

Thursday, April 16

12:00p.m. Finance Committee Meeting – Zoom

Friday, April 17

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

Every Wednesday

6:00p.m. In The Wings Youth Programming

6:00p.m. Bell Choir Practice

7:00p.m. Choir Practice

Sunday, April 19

8:30a.m. Early Service

9:15a.m. Sunday School for All Ages

10:30a.m. Morning Worship

Monday, April 20 (FPC Birthday)

5:30p.m. Session Meeting – Hybrid

Wednesday, April 22

12:00p.m. Facilities Committee Meeting

Sunday, April 26

8:30a.m. Early Service

9:15a.m. Neurodiversity Conversation – Fellowship Hall

10:30a.m. Morning Worship

12:30p.m. Beer & Hymns – Brotherwell

Monday, April 27

2:00p.m. Worship Committee Meeting

7:00p.m. Power of the Pen

Tuesday, April 28

5:30p.m. Christian Formation Committee Meeting & YAB – Zoom

Celebration of Life & Faith

Bill Falco, 11/29/1943 – 02/19/2026



Births

Parents: Noah & Sophie Diaz-Graziano
Ferren Diaz-Graziano – 03/01/2026

Parents: Justin & Lindsay Percivill
Maverick Percivill – 03/10/2026

Weddings

Austin & Clara Rue – 03/21/2026

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

2 Avery & John Kerley **3** Barbara Kidwell **5** Joyce Jones, Nancy Newman **11** Ryan Fergus **13** Heather McNair, Cody King, Rachel Delk **15** Jeff Horn **17** Carl Wright **19** Patsy Norman, Katelyn Jaynes, Mack Gingles, Lauren Olivarez, Nancy & David Lacy **20** Tom Fergus, Benjamin Odajima, Evelyn Kerley **21** Drew Risinger, Katie Valenzuela **22** Emily Bohn **24** Michelle Plaskett **25** David Smith **26** Sam Odajima **27** Bricker Bruner, George Kidwell, Beth Olson, Jeanne & Don Barrett **29** Blaise Runyon **30** Abby Murphy

OUTREACH

Caritas Highlight

Thank you to everyone who donated food and hygiene items to Caritas during the month of February. We collected 128 lbs of items that were delivered to Caritas for distribution. It is a delight to continue our partnership with Caritas, which began its work in 1967 out of the basement at First Pres!



OUTREACH & MISSIONS

SEEKING TO RECONCILE THE WORLD TO GOD THROUGH MINISTRIES OF JUSTICE AND MERCY



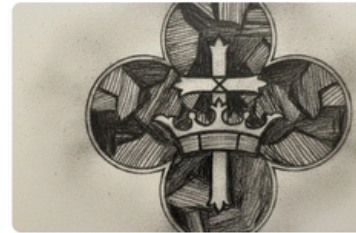
COMMUNITY PARTNERS



INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS



OPEN TABLE



SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Outreach Website Updates

We have been making updates to the church website, and you will see that our Outreach section has gotten an overhaul. Under the Outreach tab on the church's homepage, you will find updated pages and information for our community partners, international mission, and the Open Table college ministry.

See page 12 for more website updates.



Presbyterian Women Shower for Talitha Koum Institute

Presbyterian Women invite all women of FPC to an "April Shower" for Talitha Koum Institute of Waco on Saturday, April 25, 2:00–4:00 pm in the Foundation Parlor. Enjoy fellowship and refreshments while learning about TKI's work with young children and families from Kris Olson. Those who wish to give may bring an HEB gift card, Huggies diapers (sizes 5–7), or shop the Amazon Wish List at talithakoum.org. For more information, contact Sherry Cragen (254-644-1019) or Susan Somerville (512-921-1732).

Earth Care Congregation

First Pres has re-certified as an Earth Care congregation for the twelfth year! Taylor has been meeting with representatives from other Earth Care congregations in Grace Presbytery to discuss how congregations from across the presbytery can partner in their efforts. If you would like to learn more or be part of the conversation, reach out to Taylor: tholleyman@firstpreswaco.org.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Beer & Hymns



Save the date: Sunday, April 26th
12:30-2:00 p.m.

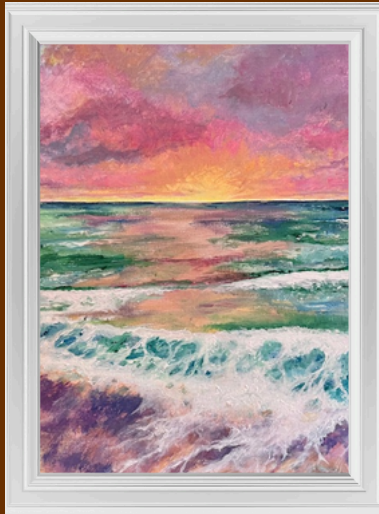
Join us for Beer, Brats, and Hymns at Brotherwell Brewery after church on April 26th.

Non alcoholic beverages available.



Celebration of the Bill & Judy Annual Art Show

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2026 Bill and Judy Franklin Art Show. We are so grateful to fill the hall with your creative work. Special thanks to Esther Lee and Ben McNamee for helping organize and curate the displays. Also, to Malorie Montoya for organizing the contributions of our children and youth.



Church Retreat Sign Up Coming Soon

Watch for our 2026 church retreat sign-ups to go live in April. We are returning to Mo-Ranch November 6-8. We are thrilled for Austin Dickson to join us as this year's guest speaker. Austin is a Waco native and CEO of the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country. The Community Foundation is the organizing agency behind the Rebuild Kerr project, a multi-year, coordinated, philanthropic flood recovery effort in Kerr County.



CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Adult Summer Formation

Following our outreach theme for the year, our summer adult formation series will explore forms of displacement. Here, displacement includes but is not limited to mental and physical experiences of being "out of place" or losing one's "sense of place".

Do you ever feel 'out of place' in the dominant religious cultures of our day? Do you worry about people in our community who lack safe places to exist? Have life circumstances forced you out of your patterns and places of comfort? Such displacements shape our lives and the communities we live in.

Join us during the formation hour this summer to explore how we find a place for ourselves and others in God's emerging Kingdom.



Children and Youth Summer Formation

A Cast of Characters – we will explore various characters of scripture and consider how their stories help us to develop our character in God's world today. Children will continue in their broad-based classrooms but begin and end the session with energizing time together.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION



Junior High Jubilee

A week-long conference where students in 6th–8th grade can come out and worship, make friends, and spend time doing fun recreational activities! Additional important planning info is listed in the QR code.

More Info



Youth Celebration | June 21–25, 2026

Youth Celebration is a week-long conference for high school students who have completed grades 9–12, beginning Sunday evening with the “Big Hello” and ending Friday morning with the “Big Goodbye.” The week is filled with worship, keynote speakers, music, recreation, small groups, and meaningful time to explore faith, build friendships, and grow in a Christ-centered community.

Small groups are a central part of the experience, allowing youth to connect with peers from other churches while engaging in Bible study and conversations about faith and life.

More information can be found on the right side via the QR code.

More Info



If you have students interested in attending or if you would like to attend as an adult sponsor, please reach out to Malorie (dcf@firstpreswaco.org) or Taylor (tholleyman@firstpreswaco.org).



CAREGIVING, CARETAKING, CARING

The Echo of Life

It is spring in all her glory. We actually had some rain recently, and I'm certain I heard the earth sigh with satisfaction. And, honestly, the bluebonnets I had been waiting for and searching for, were suddenly and gloriously standing up proudly in their incredible, blue splashed beauty. I couldn't stop smiling. The bluebonnets swayed in time with the Texas wind. Fields of flowers had somehow convinced my heart that there is more happening than anger and war and killing.

My mom had a saying for times like that...those serendipitous times when our spirits reach back to a feeling and recapture the energy for now. She called it "The Echo of Life"...the connection of experiences that return to us when we need them. She explained it this way: "What we shout out into the canyon is what comes back to us." Have you ever heard an echo in a canyon? The echo repeats, reverberates, helping us remember the promise.

And when I saw the bluebonnets, I remembered my first hospice patient. She was a lovely woman, an octogenarian who was living alone and was dying with liver cancer. I was her hospice volunteer, by profession a young social worker who worked with children in adoption and foster care, and one who was clueless about how to help older adults who were dying. One afternoon, she was hurting and quiet and had turned her face to the wall. I asked her what was making her so sad. She sighed and said, "Well, of course I miss my daughter, but she is so far away. You'll think I'm crazy, but I miss the bluebonnets. I know they are out there and I'll never see them again." Well, you've probably figured out what I did! And I confess, in those days we were told that it was against the law to pick them, but I did it anyway. I took them into her room, and I wish I could show you the joy on her face. You would have thought I gave her a million dollars or found a way to get her daughter there. She lived another three weeks, and every time I saw her, no matter how bad she felt, she would say: "Oh, it's my bluebonnet girl." That was more than 40 years ago, and when I'm struggling, I remember that I was someone's bluebonnet girl. And every spring, the bluebonnets remind me that even when I can't see them, spring is coming and they'll be back. That is the echo of life.

One of the truths of caregiving is that it is reciprocal. Caregiving establishes and enhances relationships. And it finds a way even when we don't know quite what to do or what to say. It is the love that we shout into the canyon of life that comes back to us in waves....in peace....in smiles....and sometimes in bluebonnets. By the way, we managed to get my patient's daughter home as well. But that is a story of another echo for another day.

Helen Wilson Harris

HOLY WEEK

Easter Offering

Our 2026 outreach theme is displacement. In line with this theme, our Easter offering will go to support the Heart of Texas Network for Immigrant Rights (HOTNIR). HOTNIR organizes volunteers who provide advocacy, transportation, food, and legal assistance for immigrants. Funds designated for HOTNIR are held by Lake Shore Baptist Church's Refugia ministry. Funds are distributed to help cover legal fees for individuals without a criminal record who have applied for HOTNIR assistance.



Easter Sunday Breakfast

Join us for Breakfast Tacos on Easter Sunday! We will gather in the Foundation Parlor from 9:15–10:15 a.m. Please note that regular formation classes will not meet so that everyone can enjoy this time of fellowship together before worship.

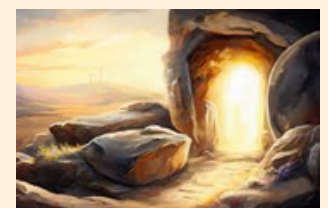
- When: Easter Sunday, 9:15–10:15 a.m.
- Where: Foundation Parlor



Holy Week Service

We hope that you will join us to cap off the reflective season of Lent at our Holy Week services.

- Palm Sunday – 8:30a.m. & 10:30a.m. – Children's procession, timpani.
- Maundy Thursday Communion service – 6p.m. – Hand washing and communion.
- Good Friday Service – 6p.m. – a dramatic service with congregational participation – The St. Cecilia Bell Choir will bring their resonance.
- Easter Sunday 8:30a.m. & 10:30a.m. – Triumphant & gentle service with handbells, organ, voice, and widor.



NEURODIVERSITY TEAM

Recently, our Neurodiversity Team—Lauren Aimone, Leslie King, Malorie Montoya, and Devan Stahl—traveled to Fort Worth to worship with Galileo Church. Their ministry is intentionally focused on serving neurodivergent individuals, and they provided us with wonderful insights and experiences.

We are looking forward to our Congregational Education Event on April 26 during the Christian Formation hour. Breakfast will be provided, and we will host our Grace Presbytery members, Jen Bluestein and Ruth Meza. This time together is one of the key ways we fulfill our participation in the grant.

In April and May, the Session will receive recommendations from our committee on how our worship can become even more welcoming. We anticipate the implementation of this hospitality will begin in July 2026.

Beyond our core team of four, we want to thank these First Pres members who have been involved in this work:

- Peggy Graham
- Helen Harris
- Taylor Holleyman
- Anita Karney
- Saralyn McKinnon Crowley

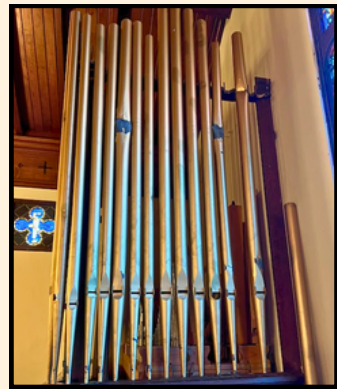


Stay tuned for more details! We appreciate your thoughts and prayers as we move toward concluding our cohort work in 2026. If neurodiversity and worship have impacted your family, please consider sharing your story by texting Leslie at (254) 214-5999.

FACILITIES UPDATE

Chapel Parlor

The Jablonowski Beautification Committee has been hard at work revamping Chapel Parlor! You may have noticed over the past few weeks that the entry doors to the parlor have been closed. Jerry Barrett is in phase one of extending the kitchenette space to make the space more available for hosting in the area. After that will come freshly painted walls, new furniture, and a few more special additions. We cannot wait for you to see the transformed space. Stay tuned!

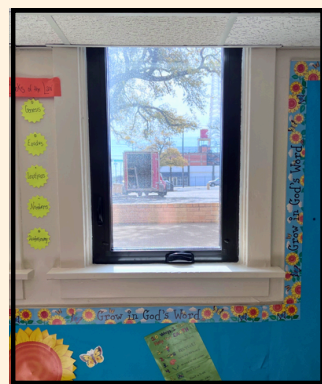


Organ Pipes

It seems like just yesterday that the balcony organ facade pipes were being sent off to Ohio to be refurbished. We have learned that they should be ready and reinstalled in July. This will come just in time to celebrate them for New Beginnings!

Basement Plumbing

The Facilities Committee has been working hard over the years to learn more about why Fellowship Hall occasionally floods. After many hours of analysis and working with plumbers and other technicians, a solution seems to be near. In March, Shelton Plumbing came out to extract roots from the pipes underground. This allowed for the pipes to be scoped with a camera to see if there are any leaks, pipe breaks, or bellying of pipes. All a part of the work to manage a historic building!

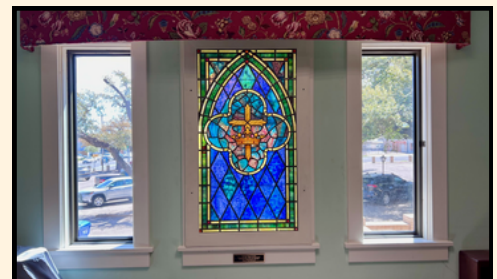


Egress Windows

As you know, in 2025, the church was able to replace 120 windows. Because of this project, on the first floor and basement level, we now have windows that are operable. This not only allows for rooms to breathe, but also provides the opportunity to use the windows to get out of the building if needed. Wes Field is working on signs to show which windows are operable per the Facilities Committee's request. Stay tuned!

Window Sills

Thank you to Dana Williams for painting the window sills throughout the church following our new window installation!



The Tower
1100 Austin Avenue
Waco, TX 76701
(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!

Changes to Our Website

[THE CHURCH](#) ▾

[WORSHIP SERVICES](#)

[CHURCH LIFE](#) ▾



[COMMUNITY PARTNERS](#)

[GET CONNECTED](#) ▾

[GIVE](#) ▾

WEBSITE UPDATE: Key Pages Refreshed

The following pages have been modified:

- Church Life: Significant updates across all age ranges. Be sure to check out the links to our new Sunday School hybrid classes.
- Outreach: Content has been revised to reflect our current community efforts.
- First Visit: A completely new page designed to welcome newcomers and provide essential information.
- New Policy page: As the Session approves policies, they will be uploaded here.

**Check Out the
Changes Here!**

