

# THE JUNE TOWER



*One of the earliest pictures of a roller coaster. It first appeared in Gaudia Poetica by Frederick Calvert, sixth Baron of Baltimore, 1770 [at the bottom], but the better printing is eight years later in John Glen King's Letter to the Bishop of Durham, 1778 [at the top].*

<https://graphicarts.princeton.edu/2018/05/18/first-roller-coaster/>



# LETTER FROM A PASTOR

Hebrews 12:1-2

Church life is a ride. I admire those of you who have buckled in. There are, after all, intense climbs. There are precipice moments. There are rapid descents. Always, there are brief moments of leveling out. Church life is a ride and an adventure. It's not for the faint of heart.

First Presbyterian has some unique strengths in the ride.



We really do buckle in. Whether it is our 98% tendency to actualize our pledges or giving of our time in consistent and reliable ways, First Presers claim their place in the ride and get ready for the unexpected together.



During the steep work, we lock in not only to the individual seat. We also lock in to one another. We take deep breaths and talk up our abilities and capacities. We remember what characterizes God, and we remember stories within scripture. We trust in getting through the steep work of wilderness, or flood, or tragedy. This is in our DNA from the 1950s and the Waco tornado.



Here is where it gets really interesting. Whether we are working through differences of opinion or taking in some difficult news, when we find ourselves at a tipping point, we don't rush the pause. We find humor in our tension. Humor is a unique form of support in which we don't abandon our own perspectives, but we don't isolate from each other, either. Precipice moments eventually give way to gravity.



There are G-forces in the downward slide. This does not always mean decline. Nevertheless, the descent toward grounding can take our breath away. Downward is not always about tragedy and loss, but about an awareness that we do not control all our outcomes. The gravity of life will have its effects on our hopes and even on our ideals. Churches' rapid descent to a groundedness, when done well, results in service to others in new and relevant ways. I notice that even though the grounding is intense, you all call out and encourage one another to hold on! There is even some post-descent exhilaration and celebration.

With tenderness, we consistently move through the boarding area. We rearrange seats. New folks get on board. Some disembark in simple or profound ways. But here we go again.

Please see the article in the May newsletter on page 8. This is the rubric of our ride. We want to add that our outreach efforts are 10% of our operating budget. A gentle reminder that the ride we endure/enjoy is not only for ourselves but for the wider world.

Faithfully, Leslie

P.S. Neurodiversity studies have imparted to us the importance of paragraph images. Hope you enjoyed them!

# JUNE CALENDAR

## Monday, June 1

5:30p.m. Diaconate Meeting - Hybrid

## Tuesday, June 2

5:30p.m. Congregational Life Meeting

## Friday, June 5

6:00p.m. Reel Spirituality - Pinewood

## Saturday, June 6

9:00a.m. Presbytery Meeting - Central Presbyterian

## Sunday, June 7

8:30a.m. Early Service

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

10:30a.m. Morning Worship

## Tuesday, June 9

6:00p.m. Faith on Tap - Woodway Slowrise

## Thursday, June 11

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

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

## Saturday, June 13

9:00a.m. Service Saturday - Habitat for Humanity

## Sunday, June 14

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, June 15

5:30p.m. Session Meeting - Hybrid

## Thursday, June 18

5:30 - 7:00p.m. Summer Celebration at Bledsoe Miller Park

## Friday, June 19 (Juneteenth)

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

## Sunday, June 21

8:30a.m. Early Service

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

10:30a.m. Morning Worship

## Monday, June 22

2:00p.m. Worship Committee Meeting - Zoom

7:00p.m. Power of the Pen - Zoom

## Tuesday, June 23

5:30p.m. Christian Formation Committee Meeting & Youth Advisory Board - Zoom

## Wednesday, June 24

12:00p.m. Facilities Committee Meeting - Hybrid

## Sunday, June 28

8:30a.m. Early Service

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

10:30a.m. Morning Worship

Taco Tuesday with Taylor. Every week @noon

General Assembly June 22 - 29th

Junior High Jubilee July 5 - 9th

Life & Faith of Joyce McCall  
May 2, 1938 - January 28, 2026



Baptism of Henry Ochel  
Son of Sarah & Jordan Ochel  
May 31, 2026



## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

**1** Sara Odajima, Maggie Ferretter, William Hart, Kathleen & William Murphy, Sam Parler & Becky Lou **3** Sunny Fullerton, Hillary & Charlie Burgess **4** Charlotte & Ron Henderson **6** Melanie Cook **7** Mike Jones, Taylor Holleyman & Enid Watkins Holleyman **8** Matthew Boss, Mackenzie Anderson **9** Bill Beaty, Phil Hering, Sue Baker, Sherry & Jimmy Johnson **10** Tyler Black, Cameron Patterson **11** Jack Cook, Cathy & Mike McPhee **12** James Hill, Lenore & Henry Wright, Noel & Ben Lacy **13** Jamie Delk, Erica Speegle, Holly & Ryan Joyner **14** Steve Cook **15** Max Anderson, Lenore Wright, Mary Lynn & Berry Klingman **17** Mark Harren, Sarah Delk, Madison & Jake Ochoa **18** Ron Henderson, Deedie Hering **20** Austin Weaver, Becky & Vic Ward **22** Gale & Dick Kannwischer **23** Matthew Malavanti, Caroline & Blair Hart **25** Natalie and Don Risinger **26** Kynadie Montoya **27** Bill Nesbitt **28** Barbara Neimer, April & Scott Wagner

# OUTREACH

## PW Shower for Talitha Koum

Presbyterian Women hosted an "April Shower" for Talitha Koum Institute (TKI) on April 25 in the Foundation Parlor. Guests enjoyed fellowship, refreshments, and heard from Kris Olson, with additional insight from Helen Kovacs. Thanks to all who helped plan, set up, clean up, and contributed treats, H-E-B gift cards, monetary donations (\$500 total), and many diapers. TKI is grateful for the support! Watch for upcoming Presbyterian Women events to join in.



## Teacher Appreciation Lunch

Because of your stewardship & pledges, our outreach budget provided a teacher appreciation lunch for 90 faculty and staff members at South Waco Elementary in May. We love supporting our educators and local schools. Thank you for all the ways you contribute to these efforts.



## Church Cleaning Day

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Church Work Day in May. A hard-working crew of 12 dusted and polished the pews in the Chapel and Sanctuary. A few brave individuals even cleared leaves out of our Atrium space. Thanks to all the volunteers!



## Summer Service Saturdays

- Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity: June 13th at 9a.m. Meet in Franklin parking lot at 8:45a.m.
- Carter Blood Care Blood Drive: July 25th, 9a.m.-1p.m. In Franklin parking lot.



# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## 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.



## Taco Tuesdays 🌮

Join Taylor each Tuesday of the summer for lunch at a different Taco spot! Each week's location will be announced in Realm and in the Bulletin. Reach out to Taylor to have your favorite spot included on our summer tour ([tholleyman@firstprewaco.org](mailto:tholleyman@firstprewaco.org)).



## Summer Events Calendar

Summer Celebration at the Park: June 18, 5:30 - 7 p.m. Join us under the Pavilion at Bledsoe Miller Park for a fun summer evening. Try out the new STEAM Center playground, bring a sack dinner, and enjoy some Kona Ice!



## Breakfast at Wimbledon 🎾

July 11th, 10 a.m. The Joyner Family is hosting breakfast at Wimbledon. Dress in your sportiest white to enjoy some tennis, yard games, and a light brunch!



## Swimming at the DuPuy's

August 29th, 4p.m. Young adults and young families (and anyone young at heart) are invited to the DuPuy's for a swim. Bring a snack or drink to share and a friend.

# CHRISTIAN FORMATION SUMMER 2026

## Junior High Jubilee

- Dates: July 5–9
- Sponsor: Deacon, Jen Ferretter
- Attendees: Lucy Ferretter, Molly Brock, and Brianna Harren

On Sunday morning July 5 we will be offer blessings to our youth and leadership as they head out for this week of fellowship and growth.



## Adult Summer Formation: Finding our Place

This summer, our adult formation series will center on the theme of displacement. Join us on Sunday mornings in the C201 to welcome an **incredible lineup of guest presenters:**

- June 14: Rev. Ted Foote author of *Being Presbyterian in a Dysvangelical America*.
- July 5: Leaders from the Heart of Texas Network on Immigrant Rights
- July 26: Open Table Director, Rev. Karen Zimmerman
- August 16: Baylor University's Center for Disability and Flourishing

## Youth & Children Sunday AM: Characters and Character

Explore the rich stories of biblical figures and the character development they inspire in us.

- Location: Top floor of the Franklin Avenue wing, among our beautiful wall murals & generous classroom space.
- What to Expect: We begin with Nicodemus and his intelligence on May 31. We'll enjoy learning and making music and meaning together.



## Character Camp

Riffing off our Sunday morning curriculum, Character Camp offers children a deeper, high-energy dive into the memorable characters of scripture! It is a wonderful opportunity for kids to get comfortable in our beautiful building.

- Dates: July 20–24
- Time: 8:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. (Noon)
- Organizers: Amy Goodman and April Wagner
- Registration: Sign up on Realm and invite your friends!



# CHRISTIAN FORMATION

*A big thank you to our summer facilitators!*

- PreK–K: Christine Huston, Greg Palm, Cathy McPhee, and Sarah Patterson
- Grades 1–3: Hillary Burgess, Chris Wright, Susan Somerville, and Sherry Cragen
- Preteen: Kris Olson, Sarah Lieber, Kathryn Delk, and Teresa Gingles
- Teens: Meg Parrish, Saralyn McKinnon–Crowley, Marilyn Harren, and Holly Joyner

We hope to honor their dedication by filling our classrooms with energy, learning, and participation all summer long.

## 2026 Parent/Youth Survey!

### Section 1: Importance Ratings — Sunday Morning Christian Formation

*Ranked by average score (0–4 scale). 9 responses per category.*

Category	Avg Score	Responses	Visual
Peer Fellowship	3.56 / 4	9	
Bible Study/Prayer	3.33 / 4	9	
Time with Pastor/Staff	2.56 / 4	9	
Food and Fun	2.33 / 4	9	
Service Projects	2.00 / 4	9	
Leadership Development	2.00 / 4	9	

### Section 2: Importance Ratings — Wednesday Evening Youth Activities

*Ranked by average score (0–4 scale). 6 responses per category (not all families participate on Wednesdays).*

Category	Avg Score	Responses	Visual
Peer Fellowship	3.67 / 4	6	
Food and Fun	3.50 / 4	6	
Bible Study/Prayer	2.83 / 4	6	
Time with Pastor/Staff	2.67 / 4	6	
Service Projects	2.67 / 4	6	
Leadership	2.17 / 4	6	

### Section 3: Desired Activities at First Pres

*Number of respondents requesting each activity (out of 9 total).*

Music		9/9
Bible Study		8/9
Art		8/9
Worship leadership		7/9
Service Projects		6/9
Cooking Baking		3/9
Mentoring to younger children		2/9
Guest Lectures		1/9

# OUR BUILDING

## The Body of Ol' First Pres – Deep Work and Polish

From the sanctuary to back hallways, take a stroll through the building and see how actively the Facilities Committee Session have been working to keep our church at its very best.

### Location #1 – Early Childhood Back Staircase Wall

A section of the staircase wall had bubbled approximately 12 inches due to heavy rains and a compromised roof. After the roof was repaired, Dyer Painting Company carefully rebuilt the plaster-and-lath wall over a two-week period and completed a full repaint, beautifully restoring the space.

### Location #2 – Parlor Renovation

The Parlor renovation is almost complete. As you exit the sanctuary through the organ-side doors and turn left, you'll notice ongoing updates, including refreshed furnishings, new paint, and an expanded kitchenette designed to serve fellowship and gatherings better.

### Location #3 – Balcony

You may have noticed that the decorative pipes have been removed from the balcony area. They have been absent for over a year and are currently scheduled to return in July. The picture captures them currently in the Ohio A.R. Schopp's Son's Organ Factory.

### Location #4 – Building Controls Transition

Throughout the building, we are transitioning from Johnson Controls to Capstone Mechanical for our online HVAC controls. This process is expected to take approximately two months, barring any unexpected issues. The transition is already underway, and we will continue providing periodic updates as progress is made.

### Location #5 – Elevators

Both elevators—located near the choir room and the organ narthex—are approaching the end of their current service cycle and will require updates within the next few years. We are currently securing a new contract with a different elevator service provider to ensure continued reliability and safety.

# CAREGIVING, CARETAKING, CARING

## Caregiving Across the Lifespan at First Pres

One important overarching factor that defines caregiving is the awareness that we need each other. We value our independence and guard it zealously. But the truth is, we are interdependent. None of us do well without support in various degrees at different times.

Many of us think about caregiving in terms of family, and that is an important place to start. We claim independence as we seek reassurance that help is available when needed. True confession: I don't want to depend on anyone. However, my reality is that I count on trusted family and friends to be there when needed. That balance of self-reliance and dependence is true for most of us across the life stages and is frequently the role of the family.

It starts early as parents are the ultimate caregivers for children, beginning before birth with healthy eating and regular doctor visits; continuing in infancy when little ones require total care. As the little ones grow, their contribution to the caregiving process is to alert us when they need something. Perhaps you have heard the clarion call of a hungry infant at 2 a.m. Over time, they communicate their progress. Our eight-month-old grandlove demonstrates her resilience as she army crawls in a body brace, cooing and smiling in triumph. Our two-year-old grandson is teaching all of us (again) that his strident communication is both compelling and rewarding when he lifts those loving arms for a hug. The older siblings join the family caregiving team by distracting, entertaining, and loving on the "littles." These "biggs" also need new and emerging forms of caregiving (i.e., listening ears, homework help, behavior modeling and instruction, healthy food choices, church events, soccer game attendance, piano lessons, Friday night family movies and popcorn, bedtime stories and prayers, cuddling and story-telling during scary storms), and the list goes on.

The never-ending parental caregiver tasks change over time as children grow in independence and self-reliance, but my experience is that the role of parental caregiver is one for life.

Grandparents are caregivers as well: transportation to and from school, hosting shopping adventures, reading books, providing snacks, finding band aids for scraped knees, watching sports, piano recitals, and school programs (sometimes on FaceTime), and "child sitting" so parents can occasionally have a date night or weekend trip away together. Grandparents who provide caregiving increasingly receive caregiving as well, like transportation to the doctor, or lawn mowing, or meals in times of illness, and those important check-in phone calls.

These are the stuff of caregiving relationships. So, for those of us for whom family of origin is small or geographically distant, we also develop friendships that become surrogate family. My "sister/friend" Carolyn lives in Florida now, but the phone provides access to be caregivers for each other: check-ins on aches, pains, and politics, and celebrations of Carolyn's plants, flowers, pets, and all things living. All of those aspects of relationship and sharing are measures of caregiving.

At First Pres, our family of faith, I see so many ways we are caregivers for one another. I hope to write more in the coming months about some compelling ways we are a caregiving family at First Pres: the faithfulness of our Prayer Committee and other committees of the Diaconate; the groundbreaking work of the Neurodiversity Committee and the Session; the ways our Elders provide leadership and keep our tangible and intangible work going; the inspiration of our choir, bell choir, musicians and leaders; the preparation and knowledge of our Christian Formation team;

the devotion and commitment of those who repair, improve, clean, and tend to our facility/our mothership; the depth, thoughtfulness, and encouragement of our ministry staff; the dedication of volunteers who show up each week; the life changing ministry of Meals on Wheels; the energy and prescience of our youth; the Spirit Box magic of our littles; and so much more. Join me in the coming months on the adventure of celebrating our family caregiving at 1st Pres.

*Helen Wilson Harris*

## NEW MEMBER & CONFIRMATION



Jake Ochoa is a McGregor native who graduated from Reicher Catholic High School, McLennan Community College, and Texas Tech University. Since graduating high school, Jake has worked full-time for local businesses and is currently a first-year English teacher and coach at Connally High School.

Madison Ochoa grew up in Northern California and graduated from Baylor. After graduation, Madison chose to remain in Waco and has worked as a fundraiser for several nonprofits focused on supporting families and women's health. She now works in fundraising at Baylor.

Madison and Jake met while working at Magnolia in 2017 and were married in Hawaii in June 2021. They have one daughter, Wren, who will turn three in June.

Both Madison and Jake were raised Catholic and are grateful for that foundation, but are looking forward to growing more in their faith as a family at First Pres. They look forward to getting more involved, building community, and raising Wren in an environment that reflects their values and puts faith into practice in everyday life.

### Confirmation

We are delighted to celebrate the confirmation of Josh Delk (left) and Isaiah Patterson (right)! Over six weeks, these young men diligently completed our confirmation curriculum with Leslie and Taylor, with character, wisdom, and camaraderie. On Sunday, May 10th, they presented their faith statements and were warmly received into active membership by the Session at a called meeting in Chapel Parlor. We are so proud of Josh and Isaiah, and we look forward to seeing how they will continue to strengthen First Pres.



### Curiosity in Questions

During worship, one of our young 5th grade theologian, Jameson Joyner, wrote down two questions: 1. Why were there 12 disciples...there has to be more, right? 2. Why are all the disciples men? He presented the questions to Pastor Leslie after the service. She replied, "The disciples are often presented as grouped in 12 because the scriptures wanted us to know that the Jesus movement was continuous with the 12 tribes of Israel. They are often presented as men because our Judeo-Christian tradition rose up the midst of many religions that worshipped nature, and women often led in those environments."



# GENERAL ASSEMBLY / SOUTH REGION

## Grace Presbytery and First Presbyterian: April Gatherings

Our congregation is located in the southern region of Grace Presbytery. Throughout April, leaders from across the South-end gathered for two important events focused on collaboration, governance, and annual connection.

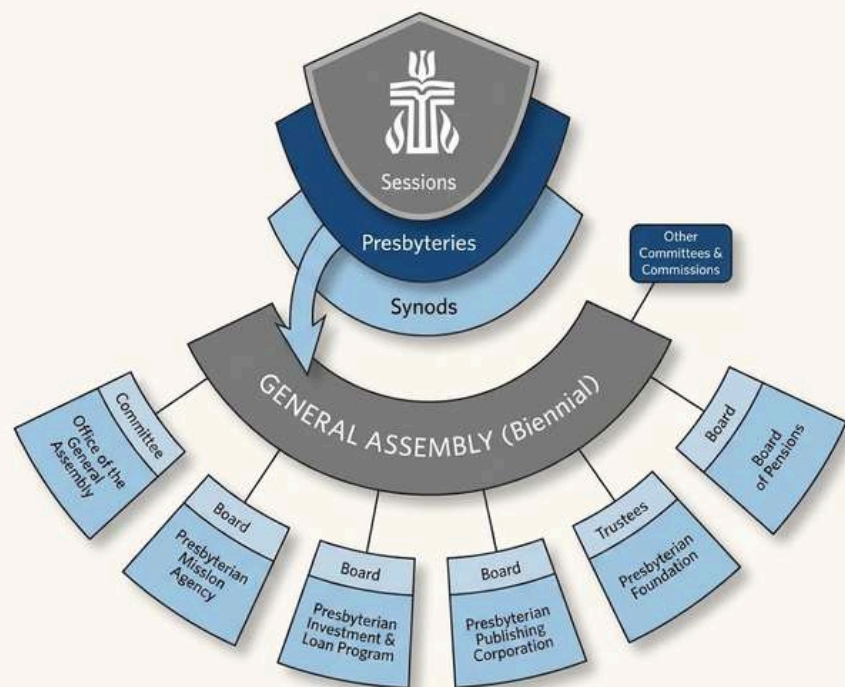
- **April 18: Clerk of Session Annual Reading** The clerks of our southern-end Sessions gathered for the annual reading of the minutes. Marsha Alvarado graciously stood in for our own clerk, Ken Kuhns. During this peer-review process, congregational clerks carefully review each other's work to ensure that church minutes accurately record our rich local history, uphold Presbyterian polity, and maintain proper due process. The Grace Presbytery Stated Clerk traveled down to oversee the session and share a meal with the southern-end clerks.
- **April 28: Presbytery Listening & Support Luncheon** Associate Executive Presbyter Katie Cummings and her staff traveled to the South End to meet with area pastors and congregational leaders at Central Presbyterian Church. First Presbyterian was well represented by Dr. Jim Ellor, Josh Carney, and Leslie King. The luncheon provided a valuable opportunity for Presbytery leadership to learn more about our current congregational life and discuss tangible ways they can support our ministries moving forward.

## Staying Connected Across the PC(USA)

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is preparing to meet next month. To keep our national connection strong while working efficiently, the Assembly will use a hybrid format:

- June 22–24: Committee meetings and initial work will be conducted online.
- June 27–July 2: In-person plenary sessions and worship will take place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Please keep the commissioners and leaders in your prayers as they discern the future work of our national church.



**GA 227  
Streaming**



**GA 227  
Info**

**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!**

## SUMMER MUSIC 🎵🎵

During the summer months, our music ministry shifts from full choir leadership to a variety of soloists and small ensembles. Summers also offers opportunities for vocalists outside the choir. If you are interested in singing as a soloist or ensemble member, please contact Austin Ingalls at [chancelchoir@firstpreswaco.org](mailto:chancelchoir@firstpreswaco.org)

🎵 We are also grateful to Martha du Preez and Shane Montoya of St. Cecilia's Bell Choir for coordinating bell offerings for the 8:30 service this summer. Those interested in learning more about bells at 8:30 may contact Shane Montoya at [office@firstpreswaco.org](mailto:office@firstpreswaco.org).

🎵 Our Bell Choir Director, Dr. Amy Goodman, will be away for much of the summer; questions may also be directed to Carol Barrett at [hellocb123@yahoo.com](mailto:hellocb123@yahoo.com).

🎵 Summer Music 10:30 Schedule	
● May 31	Austin Ingalls, soloist
● June 7	John Jovicich & Brian Rainosek
● June 14	Women's Ensemble
● June 21	Choir seated
● June 28	Austin Ingalls, soloist
● July 5	Men's Ensemble
● July 12	Women's Ensemble
● July 19	Choir seated
● July 26	Austin Ingalls, soloist
● August 2	Men's Ensemble
● August 5	Choir rehearsals resume
● August 9	Stern mother-daughter duet
● August 16	Choir seated