



# ***THE SEPTEMBER TOWER***

## **The FPC Bunch**



The First Pres Bunch is charging into the second half of the year with energy and excitement! Our staff is all hands on deck to make sure the rest of 2025 is packed with great events, meaningful connections, and plenty of fun along the way. Let's finish the year strong—together!

# ***LETTER FROM A PASTOR***

## **Old First Pres and Emerging First Pres**

It is no small thing to be a historic church.

Back in the day, 1855, that is, Kansas was bleeding. The nation would slip into civil war in 1861. Our job, at First Pres, was to be a hub for those folks who were arriving to settle Waco for at least a second time. After the Waco people settled in the 1700s, Europeans arrived and settled beginning in 1849. We were part of that "second settlement" of the community. We have not been perfect. But we have been present.

It is no small thing to be a historic church.

Back in the day, we were constructing, moving and constructing. Once we arrived to this, our 3<sup>rd</sup> building, between the 1950s and the 1980s, our campus doubled in size. All the while we were developing beauty in the stained glass, triaging tragedies, and hosting ministries for a strong community. We have not been perfect but we have been present.

It is no small thing to be a historic church.

Arriving to today, we feel the tensions of civility and shared governance. We are managing the significant campus that has been bequeathed to us by the generations before. The growing edges of Waco extend away from downtown. In these days, we manage an upstream flow into our congregation. Folks who choose to flow past demographic trends in order to arrive at historic space and historic learning and historic grace. It's not a perfect place but a place for genuine presence and examination of life and faith.

It can be a transformative experience to be part of a historic church.

Emerging toward tomorrow, we see ourselves in the historic past, the crucible-like present and the dawning of tomorrow. Like the stained glass pieced, placed and pained – in. We are assembled in all of our variance, diversity and irregularity. Unlike the glass we are not leaded into place but reassembling each week. Some of you pick a different pew. Others of you take a risk to speak to a person who is new to you. Still others try out new ways to serve. And in all these ways, we pick up God's light just a little differently. We are what we have been. We are emerging. We are participating in something larger than ourselves. We won't have to be perfect, but will we be present in the transformative moments?

History is not held, but imparted for the sake of what is next. It is such a joy to arrive through history and to enter into September 2025 with all of you.

Faithfully, Leslie



# SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

**Monday, September 1st**

Office Holiday (All Day)



**Tuesday, September 2nd**

Congregational Life Meeting, 5:30pm

**Thursday, September 4th**

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am

Personnel Committee, 12:00pm – Zoom

**Friday, September 5th**

Reel Spirituality, 6:00pm – Pinewood

(2223 Austin Ave Suite D, Waco, TX 76701)

**Saturday, September 6th**

Service Saturday, 9:00am – Habitat for Humanity

**Sunday, September 7th**

Worship, 8:30am – Hybrid

Christian Formation, 9:15am

Worship, 10:30am – Hybrid

Ice Cream Social, 3:00pm – Fellowship Hall

**Monday, September 8th**

Presbyterian Women Meeting, 1:00pm – Hybrid

Diaconate Meeting, 5:30pm – Session Room

Admin Meeting, 5:30pm – Zoom

**Tuesday, September 9th**

Faith on Tap, 6:00pm – One Day Bar

(618 Columbus Ave STE B, Waco, TX 76701)

**Thursday, September 11th**

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am

Finance Committee meeting, 12:00pm

**Sunday, September 14th (Devan Stahl Preaching)**

Worship, 8:30am – Hybrid

Christian Formation, 9:15am

Worship, 10:30am – Hybrid

Our Hybrid House, 5:30pm

**Wednesday, September 17th**

This is First Pres, 5:30pm – Chapel Parlor

**Thursday, September 18th**

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am

**Friday, September 19th**

Men's Breakfast, 7:30am – Fellowship Hall

**Sunday, September 21**

Worship, 8:30am – Hybrid

Christian Formation, 9:15am

Worship, 10:30am – Hybrid

**Monday, September 22nd**

Session Meeting, 5:30pm

**Tuesday, September 23rd**

Youth Advisory Board &

Christian Formation Meeting, 5:30pm – Zoom

**Wednesday, September 24th**

Facilities Committee Meeting, 12:00pm

Worship Committee Meeting, 1:30pm

**Thursday, September 25th**

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am

**Sunday, September 28th**

Worship, 8:30am – Hybrid

Christian Formation, 9:15am

Worship, 10:30am – Hybrid

**Monday, September 29th**

Power of the Pen, 7:00pm

**Tuesday, September 30th**

Israel & Palestine Class, 12:00pm – 1:15pm

**Celebration of Life & Faith**

**of Delores Horne**

12/27/1929 – 8/6/2025



## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

**2** Sue Jacobson, Riley Redmer **3** LaRaine DuPuy **5** Charlie & Sharon Stern, Katie Black, Mike Harper, Cooper Lacy **6** Mike Jacobson, Larry & Sandra LeFevre **7** Steve & Staci Dalton, Alex & Gretchen Eichenberg, Joe Riley **8** Pete & Sue Patrick, John Plaskett, Rachel Stern, Malorie Montoya **9** Jack Hicks, Don Howe, Daniel Swenke **10** Juanita Dubowsky **11** Piper Percivill, Steven Field **12** Staci Dalton, Maddie Odajima **13** Roane Lacy, Finley Gingles **14** Charles Metz, Karl Stottlemeyre, Monica Anderson, Jameson Joyner **16** Connie Watkins **18** Sophia Swenke **19** Carrie Muehlenbein, Kathy Jones **22** Michael & Carrie Muehlenbein, Lee & Toni Percivill, Paige DuPuy **23** Rock & Heather McNair, Steve Swenke **25** Marvin Lamaak, Barbara Lamaak, Jacklen Smith **26** Cole Risinger, Amy Goodman **28** Luke & Jennifer Ferretter, Kathryn Delk **29** Kyle Plaskett, Alisandra Becerra **30** John & Brenda Stephens, Nancy Morrison, Elijah

Becerra

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Thank you for coordinating the blood drive on 7/26/25. Coordinating blood drives is one of the best ways to ensure local patients have access to the lifesaving blood they need, your efforts are greatly appreciated.

First Presbyterian Church of Waco Blood Drive By the Numbers: 17 donors registered for the blood drive and 6 were first-time donors. In total, 15 units were collected.



Join us for the Ice Cream Social on Sunday, September 7 at 3:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Enjoy sweet treats, good company, and fun trivia!

Sign-up in Realm to help provide ice cream, toppings, or drinks. Anyone who brings homemade ice cream is eligible to win the prized Golden Scoop!



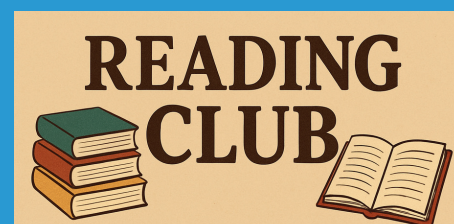
We are returning to Mo-Ranch for our Church Retreat November 7-9. Sign-up in Realm or contact the church office to reserve your spot. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn, worship, and play together. Registration is due by September 1 and spots are filling up quickly. Contact Taylor with any questions.



We are excited for the Olson's to host the Pig Roast again this year on Saturday, October 11th. More details to follow.



The First Pres Reading Group meets quarterly on the third Tuesday of the month. Jackie Lott coordinates this group. Call the Church office for more information at 254-752-1665. Next gathering is October 21, 2025 and our book is The Secret Life of Sunflowers by Marta Molnar .





# CHRISTIAN FORMATION

## Midweek Programming: Cha & Chats starting in September

Youth join us every Wednesday evening for Cha & Chats! We gather at the church at 6:00 PM and walk together to Cha Community, where youth enjoy an hour of meaningful discussion while sharing refreshments. Afterward, from 7:00–8:00 PM, we return to the church for Study Hall—a quiet, welcoming environment where youth can focus on homework, projects, or reading with encouragement and support. This midweek rhythm is a great way to connect, reflect, and grow—both in community and in learning.



## Body, Mind, and Soul Camp 2025 Recap

Body, Mind, and Soul Camp 2025 was a huge success! Each day was filled with meaningful lessons, creative activities, and joyful fellowship. Children & youth explored the theme of water through Scripture, music, science, art, and play—learning how God provides living water that refreshes our spirits and sustains creation. From decorating water camels and rain barrels, to yoga and devotionals, to hands-on experiments and games, campers engaged their whole selves—body, mind, and soul. The week concluded with two beautiful musical renderings on Sunday at both the 8:30 & 10:30 services. We are grateful for all the volunteers, families, and partners who helped make this year's camp such a powerful and faith-filled experience.



# CHRISTIAN FORMATION

## PreK / Kindergarten

Our youngest learners will explore the Old Testament with the Frolic Preschool Curriculum. Through play, song, and activities, they'll discover that God made the world good, loves them, and cares for them—while growing in faith through kindness, listening, and wonder.

## 1st–3rd Grade

Children will explore Old Testament stories from Adam and Eve to Daniel in the lions' den with the Sparkhouse Curriculum. Through discussion, crafts, and activities, they'll see how God has always been present—growing in faith, building friendships, and learning to live out God's love.

## Pre-Teen

Pre-teens will dive into Scripture with the Colaborate Old Testament Curriculum, exploring stories from canon to the rise of Rome. They'll wrestle with big questions, think critically, and connect faith to the challenges of middle school.

## Youth

Youth will explore core elements of faith with the Think. Do. Believe. Curriculum, focusing this fall on prayer, sin, mission, salvation, the Bible, and Christmas—growing a faith that is authentic, thoughtful, and ready to engage the world.

## Adult Christian Formation

**Weaving Science (Meeting in C201)** The Weaving Science and Faith class will explore Neurodivergence this fall, grounding discussions in Jesus' healing stories from the Gospels with connections to Acts. The series begins Aug. 31 with a screening of Healing Hands by Jordan Ochel.

- Sept 7: Neurodiversity & Emotion – Jesus heals hearts and eyes
- Sept 14: Part II with guest speakers
- Sept 21: Neurodiversity & Self-Expression – Jesus heals mouth and ears
- Sept 28: Part II



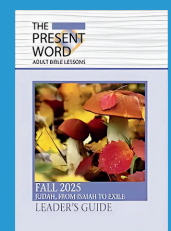
**Stuff You Missed in Sunday School (C202)** This fall, young adults will explore a new Christian Formation class led by Taylor Holleyman. Each week we'll dig into Scripture and Church history that's challenging, strange, overlooked, or misunderstood. Open to young adults, early career folks, and anyone who wants to join the conversation.

**Family Matters (Meeting in F103)** Family Matters will dive into Rachel Held Evans' video series The Work of the People.

- Aug 31: Encountering Christ
- Sept 7: Baptism
- Sept 14: Confession
- Sept 21: Communion
- Sept 28: Confirmation



**Covenant Class (Meeting in C203)** The Covenant Class will study The Present Word (PCUSA), focusing this fall on "Judah: From Isaiah to Exile." After New Beginnings Sunday, the class will turn to Isaiah and the renewal of the temple—a rich historical and theological study that grounds much of Scripture's message.





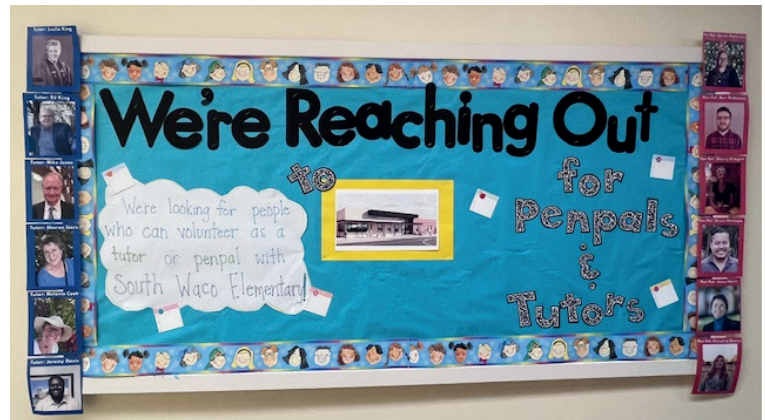
# OUTREACH

Our next Service Saturday is September 6th, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity from 9am–12pm. We expect some physical labor. Please RSVP in Realm or using the sign-up sheet located in the Narthex on Sunday. Plan to meet in the Franklin parking lot at 8:45 to travel to our Habitat site. Contact Taylor with any questions.



## South Waco – Recap

We're so thankful for our South Waco Elementary volunteers! This semester, six tutors and six pen pals partnered with students, offering encouragement, support, and friendship. From helping with schoolwork to sharing letters that brighten a student's day, our volunteers are making a lasting impact. We're grateful for the joy and consistency they bring each week—it truly takes a village!



## Adult Library @ First Pres

We are happy to announce a new section in our Adult Library: First Pres Publishes. Here you will find publications—both long-standing and recent—from members of our congregation.

- Rev. Jimmie Johnson's – All Are Chosen
- The late Jean Prisk's – Dance All Night
- The late Jim Le Master's – China Teacher
- Dr. Luke Ferretter's – The Bible as Literature

Come explore this library, now being reformed and renewed, in Room C201.

You can also browse the online catalogue here:



# ***LETTER FROM A CAREGIVER***

I wonder what happened to them, the people we met along the way—the sick, the broken, the injured we came to know in hospitals, ICUs, and rehab units. I wonder who survived; I wonder who found a way to thrive.

I don't know if I have ever experienced the same intensity of emotions, good and bad, as during that time. You feel the joy of survival and the abject fear of the unknown with complete strangers surrounding you. You see others experiencing the same thing, and you come to understand you are the stranger watching people in very intimate personal times.

The ICU at Parkland Hospital was a desperate place filled with desperately ill people and those who loved them. There were no walls, only curtains separating patients and visitors.

Because I was there a lot, and there was little privacy, I watched patients and their people come and go. I saw a young man, 16 or 17, brought in with his mother. He had run his motorcycle into a culvert and suffered major trauma. His mother and father, along with friends from the National Guard, came and talked to him, worked his arms and legs, and encouraged him though he was unconscious. The father was due to be shipped out to Iraq within a week—this was 2005. While consumed by my own fear and grief, I couldn't help but feel for the mother waiting with her catastrophically injured son, knowing her husband would soon be in a war zone.

I wonder what happened to the kid.

The Zale-Lipshy ICU was better. There was a real waiting room and rooms where you could ignore visiting hours if you were quiet. I met the mother of a Texas Tech football player who had broken his neck. He and his mom were veterans of ICUs. Their story gave me a little hope and a lot of fear about the future for Marty and me. I know what happened to this young man. He died about three years later.

Marty went to Pate Rehab in Dallas four months after her second stroke. Clients lived in apartments and were brought daily to the facility. Marty and I stayed with Max, a young stroke survivor, and Campbell, a sweet middle-aged fellow prone to tears. Both were in wheelchairs but further along than Marty. I later learned Campbell passed away not long after going home. I never knew how Max fared.

Then there was the young woman who died at Providence Hospital immediately after childbirth. She was well known, and many gathered in the ICU waiting room. I can't imagine how devastating it must have been to lose her on such an occasion. I wonder how her husband and child are today. We saw countless people—husbands with injured wives, mothers caring for children and aging parents. We saw life, in its beginnings, middles, and endings—the hard, dirty, real journey.

Life can be amazing, singing at the top of your lungs, joyous. It can also be dirty, broken, bloody misery. Real living is both. When you look back on your journey, you remember the people who touched you along the way.

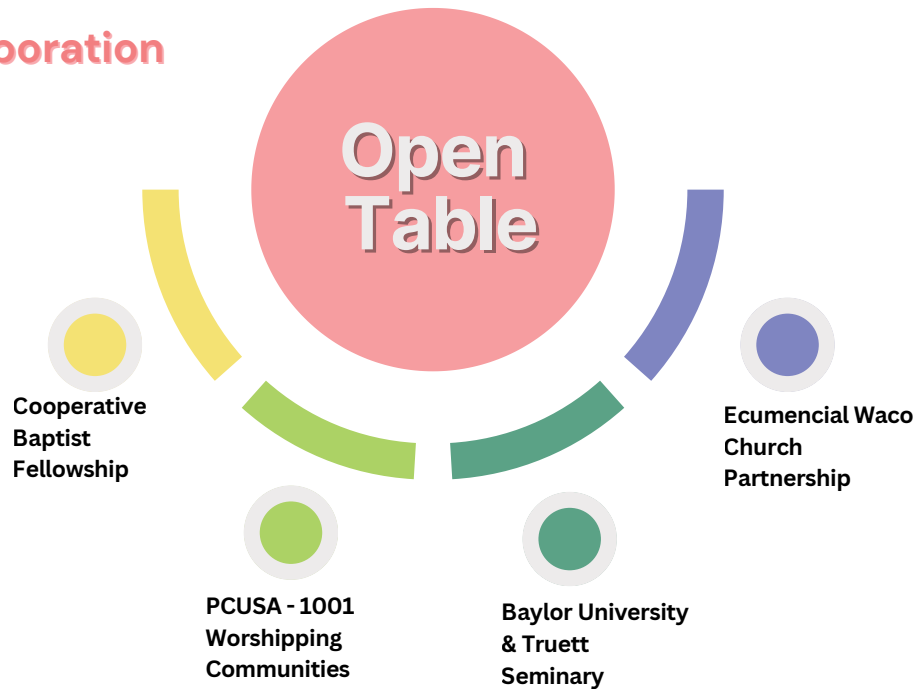
I remember all of their faces. I hope they all have found peace.

*Larry Kinard, Deacon*



# 1001 WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES GRANT

## Open Table Collaboration



## Open Table – A Collegiate Ministry and Partnership

Open Table began 3 years ago among local Associate Pastors from First Presbyterian, 7th and James, Dayspring and Calvary Baptist Church. This ecumenical partnership began talks with Baylor University. Together they collaborated to allow Open Table to become a chapel option on Baylor's Campus. Reaching out to Truett Seminary, the local congregations each pledged to hire a part time intern to run the Open Table programming.

The program's attendance grew. It was clear that Baylor students were hungry for a generous theology and fellowship. More enrichment was on the way.

- The ecumenical crew of pastors, from the same 4 churches, folded University Baptist Church into the effort. Together we are now 5 strong.
- A partnership with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship was forged. CBF, excited about Open Table, agreed to provide excellence from their field personnel.
- The Presbyterian Church, USA through Grace Presbytery helped First Waco apply for a significant grant from the ministry development program, 1,001 Worshipping Communities. This 10,000 grant was formally awarded the 1st week of August.

So, the academic year of 2025–2026 is a return to Open Table ministry but with so many more resources than before. We are excited about the possibilities.

We'll keep sharing updates. Thanks for holding the program in your mind, heart and prayer.

**Leslie King and Taylor Holleyman**

# ***NEW MEMBERS***



Sarah Patterson grew up in the rural West Texas town of Lamesa with her parents and two younger sisters. Her family moved to Seminole, Texas when she was in high school. In both towns, She always loved being a part of her church community.

She attended Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas and earned her bachelor's degree in English. She then attended Baylor University where she earned her master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs.

She moved to Auburn, Alabama in 2021 to work at Auburn University and joined First Presbyterian Church Auburn as a member.

In 2023, she moved back to Waco, Texas to work at Baylor University as a Residence Hall director. Now, she works in the Department of Student Activities overseeing operations in the Bill Daniel Student Center and leads the campus programming team. In partnership with the professional team, she gets to help student leaders bring many campus events to life, including signature traditions like Dr Pepper Hour, Christmas on 5th Street, and All-University Sing. She loves having a front row seat to see students grow as people and make lasting friends and memories.

She enjoys spending time with friends and family, going on walks and listening to podcasts, visiting the Cameron Park Zoo, exploring art museums and galleries, antiques, trying new recipes, and traveling. She has also started a very small garden this summer; the plants are growing okay.

She has been attending First Presbyterian Church Waco as a visitor since December 2023. She is excited to become a member and get more involved and connected at First Pres!



Abby Harren was born April 29, 1989 in Mt. Pleasant Texas. She grew up in Grand Saline Texas and graduated high school at Grand Saline High School in 2007. Her and Hunter married, and have 2 kids together, Brianna, 12, and Phoenix, 8. Abby currently works for SSCP Management as an Area Director and has been with the company for 7 years. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family.



# STEWARDSHIP

## It's in the Wings: Lifting Our Shared Life

First Presbyterian Church of Waco | Stewardship 2026

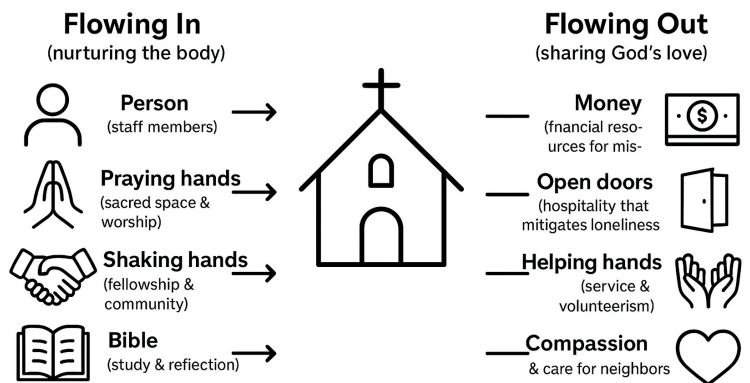
Stewardship Season begins **October 5**. This fall we will look at the angelic in our Sunday scripture readings and reflect on our own angelic presence in Christ's ministry at First Pres. Join us in lifting our shared life together!



First Pres, within Waco, hums as a hub.  
The hub needs a flow; therein is the rub.  
A flow-in for core strength.  
A flow-out to bequeath.  
The in and out flow, frees the Spirit right up.  
Lest she be bottled, she slips into Christ's Cup.  
The committed break their bread, extending it.  
The committed pour their cup, doing their bit.  
Bits become abundance.  
This also is a rub.

### Flow of Life at First Pres

First Presbyterian Church of Waco | Stewardship



Thanks for all that you will do to lift First Pres and her ministry in this stewardship season.

### Your 2025 Stewardship Committee:

Mike Johns • John Stephens • Rebecca Melton • LaRaine DuPuy • Shane Montoya • Mark Harren  
• Leslie King • Phil Hering

**The Tower**  
**1100 Austin Avenue**  
**Waco, TX 76701**  
**(254) 752-1665**  
**[www.firstpreswaco.org](http://www.firstpreswaco.org)**

**Office Hours**  
**Monday – Friday**  
**9 AM – 12 PM & 1 PM – 4 PM**



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!

## ***2025 NOMINATING COMMITTEE***

Your 2025 Nominating Committee has been hard at work to create a slate of officers for the congregation to consider on October 19th, Annual Congregational Meeting. Thanks for helping us with our work by encouraging members of our congregation to consider serving. Please reach out to us with any questions. We hope to conclude our work by the third week of September. God's horizon is bright and we are looking forward to strong leaders who can help us keep our stride!

- LaRaine DuPuy
- Wes Field
- Charlotte Henderson
- Jamie Jackson
- Charlie Olson
- Charlie Stern

