



VOLUME 68, ISSUE 7

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WACO

# THE JULY TOWER



Oh the summer months to fly into vacations and new rhythms. At First Pres we are flying high into God's big picture of mission and service. We are flying high to answer the meaningful question, "What is our relevant ministry in the times in which we find ourselves?"



# LETTER FROM OUR PEOPLE

## Hope

I have contemplated “hope” now for several months as part of this “assignment” – both as a concept and as a reality. It has been an interesting journey and I’ve been surprised about how I see hope.

Grace and hope are closely related. As we are given grace, it carries the responsibility of giving grace over time to ourselves and to others. No one is perfect – and everyone has value (basics that I believe in). When we give grace we also foster hope. I see hope as a positive push forward for our feelings about people, ourselves and the future. Hope empowers us to act, to become, to help.

Grace is the forgiveness for our imperfections.

Hope pulls from the past and helps us move forward.

Hope is the blanket that covers us at night after a hard day – giving comfort.

Hope is the sunshine that we awaken to – and holds the promise of joy for our day.

For me, the question is not how / when will I die...but rather how will I live?

With hope I wake in the morning knowing I have another day to “spend” in moving forward positively for myself and for others. Once the time is “spent” it is never recovered so I hope to spend it well.

*Dr. Nancy Grayson*

# OUTREACH



## Sign ups for July Bloodmobile!

Help us collect 22 pints of blood to support the medical community and Waco patients!



## A Handful of Help: Support South Waco Elementary

We are looking for a handful of help. Help us strengthen Waco by supporting South Waco Elementary in the Fall of 2025. We need 5 pen pals and 5 tutors to come alongside South Waco in enriching the lives of students. An interest meeting will be held on Wednesday July 9 at Noon. Lunch will be served!



## Mission Trip Reflections

Join us Sunday, July 13th, as youth and adults who participated in our recent mission trip to Frontera de Cristo share powerful reflections from their journey. Through stories of service, learning, and spiritual growth, you'll hear how the experience shaped their faith and deepened their understanding of what it means to serve across borders. Don't miss this special opportunity to celebrate the work God is doing through our church family!

## MISSION TRIP REFLECTIONS

JULY 13TH SERVICE



Frontera  
de  
Cristo



# JULY CALENDAR

## **Tuesday, July 1**

Congregational Life Meeting, 5:30pm

## **Wednesday, July 2**

Bell Clinic, 6:00pm – Sanctuary

## **Thursday, July 3**

Personnel Committee Meeting, 12:00pm – Zoom  
Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am – Choir Room

## **Friday, July 4**

Office Holiday – All Day

## **Sunday, July 6**

Worship, 8:30am – Hybrid  
Christian Formation, 9:15am  
Worship, 10:30am – Hybrid

## **Tuesday, July 8**

Faith on Tap, 6:00pm – One Day  
(618 Columbus Ave STE B, Waco, TX 76701)

## **Wednesday, July 9**

South Waco Elementary Interest Meeting, 12:00pm  
Bell Clinic, 6:00pm – Sanctuary

## **Thursday, July 10**

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am – Choir Room  
Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00pm – Zoom

## **Sunday, July 13**

Worship, 8:30am – Hybrid  
Christian Formation, 9:15am  
Worship, 10:30am – Hybrid  
Hybrid House, 5:00 PM – Zoom

## **Monday, July 14**

Administration Committee Meeting, 5:30pm – Zoom

## **Wednesday, July 16**

Music Clinic, 6:00pm

## **Thursday, July 17**

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am – Choir Room

## **Friday, July 18**

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

## **Saturday, July 19**

Dinners for 8, 5:30pm

## **Sunday, July 20**

Worship, 8:30am – Hybrid  
Christian Formation, 9:15am  
Worship, 10:30am – Hybrid

## **Monday, July 21**

Session Meeting, 5:30pm – Hybrid

## **Wednesday, July 23**

Facilities Committee Meeting, 12:00pm  
Worship Committee Meeting, 1:30pm – Zoom  
Choir Practice, 7:00pm

## **Thursday, July 24**

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am – Choir Room

## **Saturday, July 26**

Carter Blood Drive, 9:00am – Franklin Parking Lot  
Active Incident Conceal Carry Meeting, 2:00pm

## **Sunday, July 27**

Worship, 8:30am – Hybrid  
Christian Formation, 9:15am  
Worship, 10:30am – Hybrid

## **Monday, July 28**

Power of the Pen, 7:00pm – Zoom

## **Wednesday, July 30**

Music Clinic, 6:00pm

## **Thursday, July 31**

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am – Choir Room

### **Body, Mind, and Soul Camp Dates**

Monday, July 28 – Friday, August 1, 8:15am – 12:00pm

### **Tuesday Lunches in July**

July 1, July 8, July 15 – 12:00pm

## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

**2** James & Anita Karney, Lyn & George Petersen **3** Steve Dalton, Charlie Olson **4** Coretta Pittman, Clark Senter, Lisa & Tom Lacy **5** Gayle Lacy, Laura Shank **6** David Young & Susan Johnsen **7** Gale Kannwischer, Eve Riley, Laura Munn & Sondra Dubowsky **10** Karenna Malavanti, Bob & Nancy Grayson, Eve and 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** Bob Cragen, Jimmy Cook **18** Jim Maxwell **19** Mike McPhee, Jamie Jackson, Walter Lacy **20** Elinor Davis **21** Sam Ferretter **22** Marilyn George, Krystal Goodman, Greg & Meredith Palm **23** Byntlie Montoya, H.W Wright, Sarah Ochel, Charlotte Ochel **24** Gayla Smith **26** Marsha Alvarado, Larry LeFevre, Lindsay Durham, Marsha Giles, Mark & Marla Jaynes **29** Sherry Cragen **31** Sarah Lacy, Natalie Risinger



# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

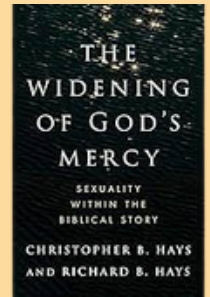
## Pig Roast & Ice Cream Social

The Congregational Life Committee invites you to save the date for the Ice Cream Social September 7 and the Pig Roast on October 11 at the Olson's Ranch.



## Tuesday Lunches in July

A review of a book referenced in Dr. Neil Messer's May 18th sermon. A Widening of God's Mercy by Christopher B. Hays and Richard B Hays. Hybrid option. 12:00pm in F105 basement level. Brown bag your lunch! July 1st, 8th and 15th.



## It is time for First Pres to return to Mo!

The Church Retreat is coming up shortly. We will be returning to Mo Ranch November 7 - November 9. This is going to be a fun weekend of fellowship and relaxation. Make sure to sign up by scanning the QR code. The deadline is August 1. Sign up soon as limited spacing is available. We hope to see you there! Have questions? Contact Shane Montoya at [office@firstpreswaco.org](mailto:office@firstpreswaco.org) or 254-752-1665.



## Dinners for 8

Dinners for 8 is an amazing opportunity for church members to get to know one another better. We are looking for 7 hosts on Saturday July 19th at 5:30 PM. The concept is to host a group of 8 at your home! Whether you prepare the entire meal or request a pot luck style dinner, fun and fellowship is sure to be had! Sign up today to be a host or an attendee by scanning the QR code! The Congregational Life Committee will reach out to let individuals know which house they have been assigned to in early July!

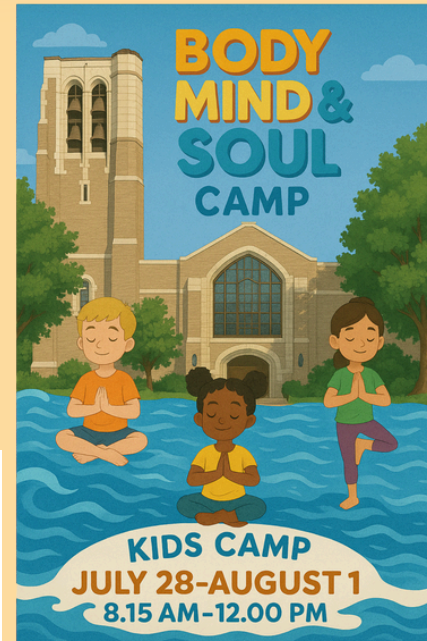




# CHRISTIAN FORMATION

## Body, Mind, & Soul Camp

Children entering pre-k through the 4th grade are invited to join us for Body, Mind, & Soul Camp 2025, July 28 – August 1, 8:15am–12pm, here at FPC! Join us for a week of faith, fun, and water-filled discovery! Campers will explore how water connects us to God, creation, and each other through scripture, science, music, art, games, and daily yoga. From rain barrel painting to boat races, every day is a new adventure in growing body, mind, and soul. Cost for the week is \$20. Register and pay on Realm or contact Jeremy Davis at [jdavis@firstpreswaco.org](mailto:jdavis@firstpreswaco.org) or (254) 752-1665.

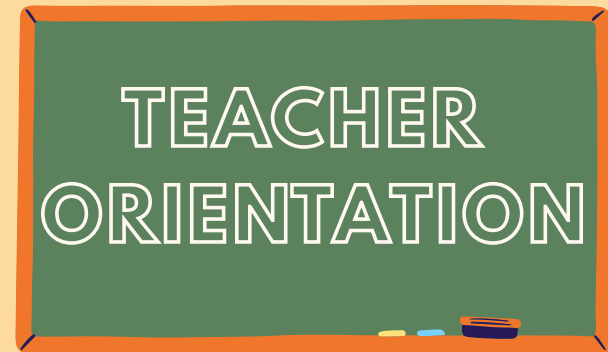


## Teacher Orientation on August 9

Noon to 2:00 with Leslie and Jeremy.  
Lunch will be served for our 2025–2026 teachers for all ages.

Our agenda:

- Get to know a bit about each other
- to celebrate our progress in Christian Formation
- set goals for the 2025–2026 year
- orient to curriculum and space



## NEW BEGINNINGS SUNDAY

Sunday, August 24

### COMPASSING:

Adventure, Bravery and Curiosity



A Global Positioning System counts on roads that are mapped.  
Compassing is deeply grounded and can make a way out of no way.

A Global Positioning System counts on electronic connection.  
Compassing requires knowing our position and connection to a wider space.

A Global Positioning System suggests expediency.  
Compassing requires an intimate and paced reading of the natural world.

Join us for a new Christian Formation Year at New Beginning Sunday. We will share breakfast, a parade of classrooms and classroom content for the coming year!



# CHRISTIAN FORMATION

## Back to School Celebration – Coming This August!

Mark your calendars! First Pres is planning a Back to School Celebration this August, and you won't want to miss it. This fun-filled event will be a great way for children, youth, and families to come together, reconnect, and start the school year with excitement, encouragement, and blessings. Stay tuned for the official date and details — we can't wait to celebrate with you!



## Upcoming Youth Service Day – Salvation Army

We're gearing up for our second Service Day at the Salvation Army on July 8th from 12:00–3:30 PM! Our youth will spend the afternoon serving in meaningful ways—sorting donations, organizing shelves, and lending a hand wherever needed—followed by a shared meal and time to reflect. We're excited for this new opportunity to put faith into action and can't wait to see the impact of this first service day as we look ahead to more to come!



## Summer Christian Formation: Faith That Flows

This summer, our children and youth are diving into stories of water, wonder, and God's unwavering presence. Each Sunday, they'll explore a different Bible passage through engaging lessons and hands-on activities—from painting baptism bowls and calming storm jars to decorating rain barrels and creating justice banners. These experiences are more than just fun crafts—they're meaningful moments that help our young people understand God's love, provision, and call to justice. Join us in praying for a summer filled with growth, faith, and deep connection for our youngest disciples.

# ARCHIVE TEAM & ACTIVE INCIDENT

**First Presbyterian Church Archive Team**  
*Preserving Our Past – Serving Our Future*

**Thank you to our Archive Team Members:**

Carol Barrett  
David Gray  
Harvey Harmon  
Deedie Hering  
Katelyn Jaynes  
Shane Montoya

*First meeting was held on June 11.*



## Active Shooter Training Summary – May 10

Fifteen members of First Presbyterian met with the Grace Presbytery Active Shooter Response Team, Dr. Jim Ellor, and John Kusewitt from 12:00–4:00 PM in Fellowship Hall.

**Here are some highlights of that gathering:**

The first two hours focused on the **ALICE Method**:

**Alert – Lockdown – Inform – Counter – Evacuate**, providing adaptable strategies to improve survival in active shooter situations.

Two simulations followed:

### 1. Classroom Lockdown Simulation

Participants learned our classrooms cannot be locked securely. Tips included using belts, ropes, or furniture to secure doors, spreading out in the room (not clustering), and using nearby objects to distract an aggressor if needed.

### 2. Sanctuary Simulation

All participants agreed to a surprise simulation. A trainer entered with Nerf balls to mimic an attack. The group practiced distracting and restraining the attacker, emphasizing stepping on the weapon but never picking it up.

## Next Steps

1. Initial report and simulation shared with the Diaconate on June 2
2. Explore zoning the building
3. Meet with members licensed to carry for input
4. Second simulation with the Diaconate
5. Congregational meeting simulation



# HYBRID HOUSE & HOME BASED CONGREGANTS

## Home-based Members and Heart-based Care

We all experience times when we are more home-based than immersed in the faster pace of daily life. Thank you for holding these individuals in your prayers and thoughts:

- Jan Bodine
- Bill Beaty
- David Dow
- Lucille Estridge  
(Anita Karney's mom)
- Bill Falco (Austin)
- Donna Fitzpatrick
- Claire Grant
- Jimmie Jo Grogan  
(Sharon Stern's mom)
- Delores Horne
- Sam Lott
- Pat McCorkle
- Carol Miller
- Barbara and Jere Neimer
- Walter Smith
- Milly Walker



## OUR HYBRID HOUSE

First Presbyterian is committed to presence across miles and space. Hybrid House is a fellowship gathering on the 2nd Sunday of month at 5:00PM

(<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84465033316>)

Together we discuss a question and get to know each other better. The points of connection between us is always surprising. Join us July 13 as we respond to the question:

"What was an important car in you life and why?"



# LETTER FROM A CAREGIVER

My parents are both 96 years old and still live at home thanks to the care giving skills of my younger brother.

He made the commitment to them and to my sister and me to stay with them in their home so they can continue to live in their own home with their own stuff with some level of independence.

He cooks, he chauffeurs, he shops, he doles out medicine and all the other daily life kind of things a caregiver does every day for their people.

Mostly he gives them the security they need to be at home instead of some sort of assisted living. He is there if one of them is sick, he is there if one of them needs help moving from one place to another and he is there to hear and know all the things each of them is experiencing as age and the associated conditions continue their march.

Both Mom and Dad are aware how fortunate they are to still be around and still be with each other and to still live at their own home. They have buried a whole lot of their friends and very few remain as independent as they are with their life partner. It is amazing to see people who have been married over 70 years that still like each other.

They could have decided years ago to go to some sort of care facility. That would have been okay. Where they are with brother John is a whole lot better and gives them all a lot more control over their lives.

They could not do this without him.

Brother John made a very conscious decision to join the ranks of the care giver. He saw the need, he said I'll do it and all of us are better for him making that decision.

I did not get to decide, life just happened. Many of you did not get to decide to be a caregiver, we did decide to be a caregiver when the role was thrust upon us. So yeah, a decision was made even when we did not feel capable of being a care giver. And of course, there are all kinds of decisions you must make every day when care giving becomes your life and passion.

I have to say, I think making the decision to step into the role of caregiver, knowing what is needed, takes moxie I do not have.

People do it every day. Every day someone steps up and steps in and helps some one else who has a need. We do that. What those people do, what my brother has done, they make me proud, and they give me hope in all of humanity.

*Larry Kinard, Deacon*



# PERSONNEL AND STAFFING

The Personnel Committee and I are happy to report that we will be in partnership with the Garland School of Social Work for the 2025–2026 academic year. Toward that end, we want to extend a warm welcome to our Clinical Social Work Intern for the Fall of 2025, Peighton Pulley. Peighton will be serving in this capacity at First Presbyterian beginning in August of 2025. She will be engaging our congregation for 18–20 hours per week.



In those hours she will be engaging with us to offer support and counseling for life challenges and changes. This might include: loss and grief, health challenges, and life course decisions. We look forward to having Peighton with us weekly in worship and introducing her to our congregation. Be looking for ways to participate with Peighton. Leslie will be Peighton's task supervisor and Deacon, Dr. Helen Harris, will be her clinical supervisor. We are very grateful to work with the Baylor School of Social work in this way.

## Searching for a Soprano and an Alto

Our First Presbyterian Choral Scholar Program is searching to fill two section leader positions for Alto and Soprano. If you have leads for us please pass them onto Austin Ingalls at [chancelchoir@firstpreswaco.org](mailto:chancelchoir@firstpreswaco.org).



# APNC UPDATE

Here's the July APNC update:

The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) continues to meet regularly, sometimes twice in a week to accommodate everyone's schedules! We often get to wave hi to 3-year old Arthur Parler as he pops onto zoom to show us his monster truck shirt or his band aid.

We completed three Round Two interviews and one more Round One interview in June. Our next steps include working with Grace Presbytery to vet specific candidates using background checks and conversations with their home Presbyteries. Then we will schedule a few in-person interviews...there is only so much we can discern on Zoom calls.

Rest assured the process is thorough and that your APNC takes the responsibility very seriously. We do appreciate your prayers.

*APNC Moderator, Kris Kaiser Olson*

**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, as well as updates about some events that are quickly approaching. Sign up using the QR code above!**

# STEWARDSHIP

## 2026 Stewardship

**Thanks to our 2026 Stewardship team: LaRaine DuPuy, Phil Hering, Mike Jones, Rebecca Melton, John Stephens.**

**Staff support includes: Mark Harren, Leslie King, and Shane Montoya.**

**We are very happy to welcome Marek Elikan, a graduate student in videography who will help us capture the meaning and opportunity in giving.**

**Together the team will work over the summer months to help invite us to the challenge of giving for Christ's ministry at 1100 Austin Avenue.**

**There is so much to anticipate in our future, let's help fund it together.**