



VOLUME 68, ISSUE 10

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WACO

# THE OCTOBER TOWER

## IN THE WINGS

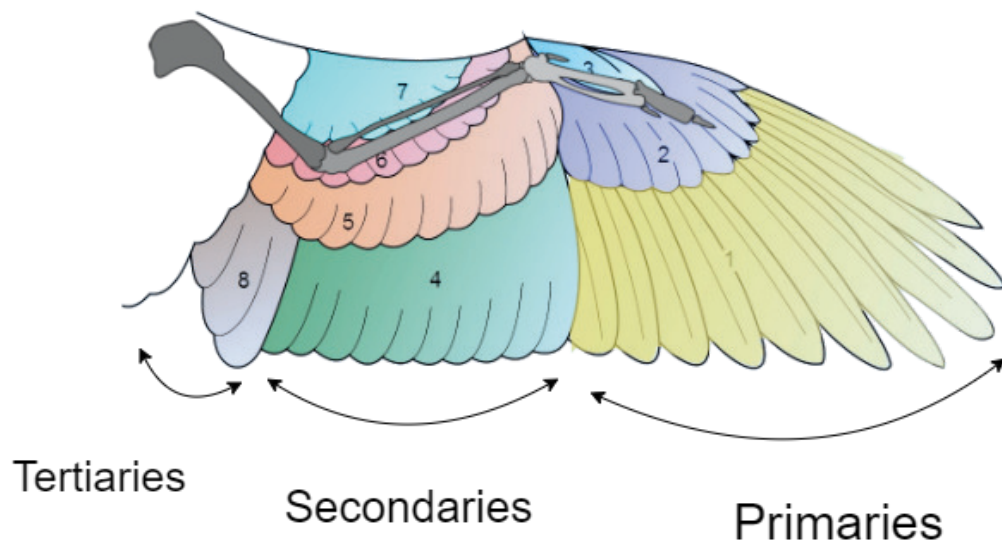


# FPC STEWARD 2026



# LETTER FROM A PASTOR

## It's in the Wings



Exodus 19:4 and Isaiah 40 are just two places in scripture where strength is likened to wings. Wings are complex things. As human beings, we know something about complexity in the wings. The bones of the wing share names with the bones of our arms and hands: metacarpus, radius, humerus. Our muscles share names: biceps, triceps, thighs, pectorals. Like other birds, Eagles have feathers on their wings.

At its root, the word "wing" means to spread out. In this way, our anatomy in the Body of Christ is in the wings. An Eagle has some 7,000 feathers for various functions of flight, insulation, and body shape. Bones and muscles are necessary features, but the ability to lift and fly is ultimately in the wings. Each feather makes a difference and adds to the possibilities.

This is true in a stewardship season for a community who seeks to be the Body of Christ for a wider world. Each gift provides lift. Each gift adds texture, beauty, and strength. The stewardship committee, session, and I would like to thank you for the way you will consider bringing your gifts and helping us lift our campus, our ministry, and our spirituality to a continued beauty and strength. So much is in the wings and we will feather-in the gifts on November 16!

Faithfully, Leslie



# OCTOBER CALENDAR

## Wednesday, October 1st

Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:00pm  
Mid Week Connections, 6:00pm  
Choir Rehearsal, 7:00pm

## Thursday, October 2nd

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

## Sunday, October 5th

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

## Monday, October 6th

Diaconate Meeting, 5:30pm - Hybrid

## Wednesday, October 8th

Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:00pm  
Mid Week Connections, 6:00pm  
Choir Rehearsal, 7:00pm

## Thursday, October 9th

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

## Saturday, October 11th

Pig Roast, 3:00pm - Olson's Ranch  
1654 Rock Ridge Road, Valley Mills, TX, 76689



## Sunday, October 12th

Worship, 8:30am - Hybrid  
Christian Formation, 9:15am  
Worship, 10:30am - Hybrid  
Our Hybrid House, 5:00pm - Zoom

## Monday, October 13th

Presbyterian Women, 1:00pm - Hybrid  
Outreach Committee Meeting, 5:30pm - Zoom

## Tuesday, October 14th

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

## Wednesday, October 15th

Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:00pm  
Mid Week Connections, 6:00pm  
Choir Rehearsal, 7:00pm

## Thursday, October 16th

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am - Choir Room

## Friday, October 17th

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

## Sunday, October 19th - Children's Sunday

Worship, 8:30am - Hybrid  
Christian Formation, 9:15am  
Worship, 10:30am - Hybrid  
Congregational Meeting, 11:30am - Hybrid

## Monday, October 20th

Session Meeting, 5:30pm - Hybrid

## Tuesday, October 21st

First Pres Book Club, 6:30pm - Lott's Home

## Wednesday, October 22nd

Facilities Committee Meeting, 12:00pm - Hybrid  
Worship Committee Meeting, 1:30pm - Zoom  
Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:00pm  
Mid Week Connections, 6:00pm  
Choir Rehearsal, 7:00pm

## Thursday, October 23rd

Presbytery Meeting, 9:00am - Dallas, TX  
Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am - Choir Room

## Saturday, October 25th

Officer Orientation, 12:00pm - Hybrid

## Sunday, October 26th - Reformation Sunday

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

## Monday, October 27th

Power of the Pen, 7:00pm - Zoom

## Wednesday, October 29th

Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:00pm  
Mid Week Connections, 6:00pm  
Choir Rehearsal, 7:00pm

## Thursday, October 30th

Classic Voice Ensemble, 9:00am - Choir Room

**Congrats to Cole Risinger and Emily Beam who will be married on October 9 of this year!**

**Celebration of Life & Faith of Walter Smith**

10/26/1940 - 9/5/2025



## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

**1** Diane Tisdale **2** Ben Hicks, Kate Goodman **3** Avery Kerley **5** Abby Jacobson, John & Michelle Plaskett **6** George & Pam Holmes **8** David George **9** Madison Wagner **10** Jerry Barrett, Sharon Stern **11** Jacob Cox **12** Gabrielle Wagner **15** Noel Lacy, Brenda Fox **16** B.G. Coulter **18** Jay Black **19** Katherine Ehlers **20** Jason Aimone **21** Julianne Boss Hopkins, Jim & Carolyn Maxwell **22** Cathy Walker, Ronnie Moore **23** Dick Kannwischer, Hailey Tucker, Scott DuPuy, Paul Ehlers **24** Jeanne Barrett, John & Harriet Davis **26** Claire Grant **29** Katie King, Kenneth Bauer, Christine Miller, Sheryle Carini, Leah Davitashvili, Kevin & Ashley Bartley



# OUTREACH

## Outreach Partnerships for 2026:

Our outreach theme for 2026 will be Displacement. We are excited to partner with organizations who provide support and resources to people and communities challenged by forms of displacement.

Partnership letters and applications will be sent out this month. Partnership applications are also available on our website.

## Collecting for The Cove:

Our outreach service for the month of October will be collecting donation items for The Cove. The Cove is a Waco-based nonprofit designed to provide a safe space for youth experiencing homelessness to access the resources they need to thrive. The greatest current need is for the following hygiene products:

- Body wash
- Conditioner
- Shampoo
- Hairbrushes
- Lotion
- Shaving cream
- Feminine Hygiene – specifically pads with wings
- Mouthwash



**Please provide full-sized products as they are already well stocked on travel sizes.** A donation box will be available in the Narthex throughout October.

## September Service Saturday with Habitat for Humanity:

Thanks to the Outreach Committee for organizing September's Service Saturday and to our team of nine volunteers who served with Habitat for Humanity. We worked in Habitat's warehouse to complete the framing for doors and windows that are now installed in a Waco home. We are glad that our sweat and prayers will help welcome a Waco family into their new home.





# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Church Retreat:

We are excited to return to Mo-Ranch for the Church Retreat November 7-9. Jackson Griggs, MD (CEO of Waco Family Medicine) will be our guest speaker. We look forward to learning from Dr. Griggs about how to support mental health in our community, and enjoying time together.



## Pig Roast:

The Pig Roast returns to the Olson's Ranch on Saturday, October 11th. The event will begin at 3pm with dinner served at 6pm. Sign-up on Realm to confirm your attendance. Please bring a side or desert to share and a chair.



## Ice Cream Social:

Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's Ice Cream Social, especially to our Congregational Life Committee and to Sharon and Charlie Stern for hosting! We had a wonderful time of fellowship, six delicious homemade ice creams, and a fun game of trivia. Congratulations to Hunter Harren on winning the coveted golden scoop!



## Celebration Way Bricks:

We have engraved and installed our first re-order of bricks along Celebration Way!

Celebration Way is a walkway in the courtyard where you can buy a brick to be engraved to remember a loved one, celebrate a baptism/confirmation/wedding, and so much more! If you are interested in purchasing a brick contact Shane at [office@firstpreswaco.org](mailto:office@firstpreswaco.org).





# CHRISTIAN FORMATION

## Into the Heart Wednesdays (more info coming weekly)!

Join us for a brown bag Wednesday night. We'll have special guest speakers each Wednesday in the youth suite! Each week will feature relevant content for the demands at work in the life of our youth.

### TOPICS:

**Into the Heart of Us**      **Into the Heart of Change**  
**Into the Heart of the Homebound**  
**Into the Heart of Drama**      **Into the Heart of Fear**



## Thanks To Our Navigators!



This year's Christian Formation classes are led by an incredible group of teachers who pour their hearts into guiding our children and youth:

Pre-K/Kindergarten: Karennia Malavanti, Sarah Patterson, Matthew Malavanti, B.G. Coulter (Helping Hands)

1st–3rd Grade: Austin Rue, April Wagner, Diane Williams, Abby Harren, Nancy Newmann (Helping Hands)

Pre-Teen: Shannon Field, Chris Wright, Emily Stottlemire, DJ King, Marla Jaynes (Helping Hands)

Youth: Jeremy Mercer, Jerry Barrett, DJ King, Clara Harper, Larry LeFevre (Helping Hands)

A special thanks to our Helping Hands volunteers. They step in wherever needed to support teachers and ensure our classrooms run smoothly. Their presence is a true blessing to our ministry.

## Captains Of Our Ship!



Behind the scenes, two vital groups help shape and support our ministry with children and youth: the Christian Formation Committee and the Youth Advisory Board. These teams dream big, plan faithfully, and walk alongside our young people as they grow in faith. We're looking for new members who feel called to serve in this way. If you have a heart for mentoring, supporting, or championing our children and youth, we'd love to have you join our team! *Youth Advisory Board Members – Scott Wagner, Rebecca Melton, Amy Goodman, and DJ King. Christian Formation Members – Jamie Jackson, Katherine Ehlers, Shannon Field, and Anita Karney*



# CHILDREN'S SUNDAY

**Mark your calendars!** On Sunday, October 19, during both the **8:30 AM and 10:30 AM worship services**, our children will be leading us in worship through music, prayer, scripture, and art. They will join our 2026 Stewardship theme "In the Wings." Together, the children will participate in a special **"feather art" project** during the sermon, adding their voices and creativity to our worship in a meaningful way.

Under the guidance of **John Jovicich**, and **Brian Rainosek**, the children are preparing two beautiful songs.

- Song of Joseph
- Here I Am Lord

## Preparation Challenge

To help our young people be ready, we encourage families to make sure children are attending Christian Formation each week. Can you commit to Christian Formation October 5, 12, and 19?





# LETTER FROM A CAREGIVER

## My Simple Faith.

Do love. Don't hate.

My simple faith was born from caring for Marty. It was born from my doubt, it was born from my anger, and it was born from my fatigue.

Love bound us early in our lives and at the end of our path together. Through Marty I learned how to really love. When the strokes took her ability to think and care for herself, love didn't wane, it was steady and real.

Marty and I had a good marriage, but it was still two people living life and dealing with all of the pieces and parts of life. Sometimes marriage wasn't much fun, it was hard. Two strokes and a broken Marty reminded me of my love for her. I learned a lot about loving during the hard parts.

After the strokes God and I had a real off-and-on relationship. I was pretty ticked about the whole stroke thing and the caregiving gig stretched on year after year and I got a ringside seat as I watched the wife I cared for diminish more and more as time went on.

As I prayed and talked to God and as God talked to me I began to understand this wasn't a God thing, it was a human thing. God didn't bless me or Marty with a divine plan and God didn't strike her down with the strokes. Delicate, miraculous creations of God broke. As amazing as humans are we break, it happens.

Somehow, through all the stuff, all the angst, anger, and disappointment, I didn't lose faith, I lost complexity.

Loving can be really hard sometimes. There are people I find impossible to love. We are charged with loving them all through those hard times. That, in my simple mind and simple faith, is what we are called to do, love and don't hate.

I once asked several of my friends if there was anyone in their life, anyone they personally knew, they hated. Not just absence of love but hatred. Almost to a person they said no, even though there were a couple of really well thought out hatreds, people who wronged them or loved ones.

We want to love, therefore we must not hate. That's hard. That's my sin.

Okay, I'm getting too preachy, that's not my gig, you have good people to do that. I'm saying that being a caregiver and being a husband of a broken wife changed me in very fundamental ways. My view of the world, my understanding of people, and my faith were all put under immense stress and God shook me by the collar and said, make it simple.

Do love. Don't hate.

*Larry Kinard, Deacon*



# REFORM AND REFORMING



## Reformed and Always Reforming:

Being Presbyterian means that we are rooted in a particular history and set of traditions. One way that we recognize our distinctive character is through identification of Presbyterianism with the broader Reformed tradition. For the uninitiated, this moniker – ‘Reformed’ – can be confusing. After all, aren’t all Protestant denominations reformed? In its original sixteenth-century use, the term referred to any of the churches and doctrines of the European Reformation that departed from the Roman Catholic Church.

Despite this general usage, the (capital-R) Reformed churches grew to distinguish themselves ever more clearly not only from the Roman Catholic Church but also from other protestant movements.

These Reformed churches originated following the Swiss reform movements of Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich and John Calvin in Geneva. However, the Reformed thinking quickly spread beyond the boundaries of Switzerland.

Succinct definitions of Reformed theology and practice are elusive. Quick definitions are often too narrow to represent the broader tradition – as is the case when Reformed theology is associated exclusively with ‘Calvinism.’ Conversely, other definitions are too broad to provide a distinctive identity – as is the case when Reformed theology is identified with ‘five solas’ that most all protestants agree on: scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, and glory to God alone. Complications of identity and definition aside, Reformed churches have traditionally been marked by such features as an emphasis on the sovereignty of God, the authority of Scripture, the centrality of grace, and commitments to Christian education and societal engagement.

Although the underlying sentiment can be found in much earlier literature, the phrase ‘reformed and always reforming’ has grown in popularity since the mid-twentieth century as an identity marker for many Reformed and Presbyterian churches. In its common usage, the impulse to be reformed and always reforming admits the finitude of all human endeavors and the ultimate sovereignty of God. It is an orientation anchored in the Reformed tradition while remaining committed to continual self-examination and open to new ways that grace may arrive in each of life’s circumstances.

At First Presbyterian Waco, the reformed and always reforming impulse runs deep. We are rooted in the traditions and histories that have shaped our corporate identity. At the same time, we continue the necessary work of self-examination, seeking new opportunities to live more fully as Children of God.

**Reformation Sunday will be celebrated October 26 – We will enjoy bagpipes and a celebration of our heritage in the faith.**

Taylor Holleyman, Ph.D.  
Director of Congregational Life



# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA

## DEEP MEANING



Scan here to  
check your answers!



Can you find all nine symbols in the above graphic?

☐ THE CROSS      ☐ THE ROBE      ☐ THE BIBLE

☐ THE FONT      ☐ THE PULPIT

☐ THE FLAMES      ☐ THE FISH      ☐ THE DOVE

☐ THE TRINITY (YOU DRAW THIS ON IN  
CONNECTING/CONTAINING ALL THE SYMBOLS)



# FRANKLIN ESTATE UPDATE

Thanks to a generous gift left by the late Judy and Bill Franklin First Pres has been able to tend to areas that have needed some extra attention. We wanted to provide an update on what has been accomplished, and what is in the works.

## Roof

- A total roof replacement was completed a few months ago. This roof should last 30 years before needing to be replaced again. This new roof helps to prevent leaks, and helps the church maintain building insurance.



## Windows

- Starting in October, all the church windows (with the exception of stained glass and decorative windows) will be replaced. These new windows will add additional security to the church, and help with utility costs.



## Handbells

- A fifth octave of handbells were purchased, and were fully refurbished. Look forward to hearing the new octave ring in worship soon. These handbells will allow the bell choir to play a full range of pieces, and will allow for expansion of more musical offerings in worship.



## Organ Pipes

- The facade of the organ pipes in the balcony have needed to be repaired. Over time they have tarnished and become weak. The plan is to have them fully refurbished and reset. This will allow for the balcony pipes to match the look of the chancel pipes, and add more beauty to the sanctuary.



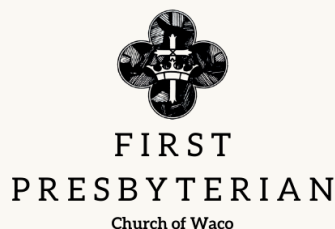
We look forward to keeping you posted on these projects as they continue to move forward. A huge thank you to the Session for their diligent work in prioritizing projects.

**PLEASE NOTE: During the window project there may be different physical office hours during certain stages of the project. We will keep the congregation alerted through Realm.**



**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!**

# OUR HYBRID HOUSE

**Hybrid House is a strategic ministry of First Presbyterian Church in Waco. Loneliness is a pervasive issue. Humor, joy, and fellowship are great remedies.**

**Hybrid House is a joyful strategy to connect across space in order to have fellowship opportunities with our church family. Those who may be looking for a church family are most welcome as well.**



**This monthly event is also a strategy. It can be a practice space to learn more about First Presbyterian. It can be a practice space to learn more about using Zoom before circumstances necessitate something like Zoom to stay connected.**

**We hope you will join us the 2nd Sunday of each month at 5:00 PM!**