

# THE AUGUST TOWER

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



## THIS MONTH'S NEWS AND UPDATES:

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**LETTER FROM A PASTOR**  
PAGE 2

**CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & OUTREACH**  
PAGE 3

**MONTHLY CALENDAR**  
PAGE 4

**MEMBERSHIP GROWTH**  
PAGE 5

**CHRISTIAN FORMATION**  
PAGES 6 & 7

## IDENTITY IN ORBIT

"A Star is Born" is a movie that has been made four times. Important themes of becoming, loving and releasing are at work in the movie. First Presbyterian, in her long ministry, has celebrated many stars in her constellation.

During the first three weeks of August, we invite you to pick up a card-stock star from our sanctuary. Write your name and attributes and decorate a bit if you want. The week of August 21, we will begin hanging them in place in our atrium hallway. Even if you are out of state or across the miles, send a star and we'll hang it in our constellation. (We'll even take a picture and send it to you!) We are going for 100% participation as we prepare for another year of Christian Formation in God's presence.

# LETTER FROM A PASTOR

## CONSTELLATION & FORMATION

Identity in Orbit is the theme for Christian Formation 2023-2024. Whatever your age or stage of life, we will be inviting you on New Beginnings Sunday to hang your star in the First Pres Constellation in Fellowship Hall.

There are a handful of reasons that Christian Formation makes all the difference in our lives:

- **LOST IN SPACE, FOUND IN SPACE** - Christianity, in the era of television, trended toward a radical individualization and even privatization. "I can worship my God on Sunday morning". One of the outcomes of this trend is individuals who declare Christianity according to their preference. **Christian Formation gatherings are a spiritual discipline that keeps us from atrophying in our preferences.** We are asked to consider another's point of view and weigh it up against our own perspectives. No one does well only on their own. Constellations and communities are the way a meaningful world is experienced.
- **SHINING** - Scripture is indomitable, funny, outrageous and even comforting. Every week of Christian Formation is an adventure in a new aspect of the Judeo-Christian (Hebrew and New Testament) story that inspires our own possibilities. **Christian Formation at First Presbyterian is not a downer of prohibitions attempting to convince us of our own depravity. Inspiration and fuel for the week is found there.** As the planets orbit the sun, so our weekly orbit around scripture is life-giving.
- **GRAVITATIONAL** - In the human being's longing for God, **many adults have shared with me their wish that they were more competent in the scriptures and what they mean.** Christian Formation hour and the midweek classes are all about growing in this way. When one is a regular attendee in Christian Formation one can meet this pervasive longing that shows up in so many of our pilgrimages.
- **ALIGNMENT** - Christian Formation is an important supplement and addition to our worship services. The hour to sit in small groups **allows us to grow in our awareness as a unique congregation and why others might be interested in such a community.** Perhaps others might want to be invited so that they can make a contribution to our congregation's strength and character. Perhaps they would want to be invited in order to acquire some of that strength and character for themselves. Christian Formation is a deep economy of sharing.
- **ARTIFACTS AND EVIDENCE** – Christian Formation allows us to make our appropriate impact on a congregation. We are known in deep ways. There are honest and honorable stories that develop about who we are and who we were in God's presence. **There is a slice of immortality and resurrection at work in communities with whom we share such intimacy.**

After the pandemic, First Presbyterian worked to offer forward 5 strong adult Christian Formation offerings. This year we will expand to six. Won't you consider helping us grow and commit in reasonable ways to a Christian Formation small group on Sunday morning or mid week?

Faithfully, Leslie

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & OUTREACH

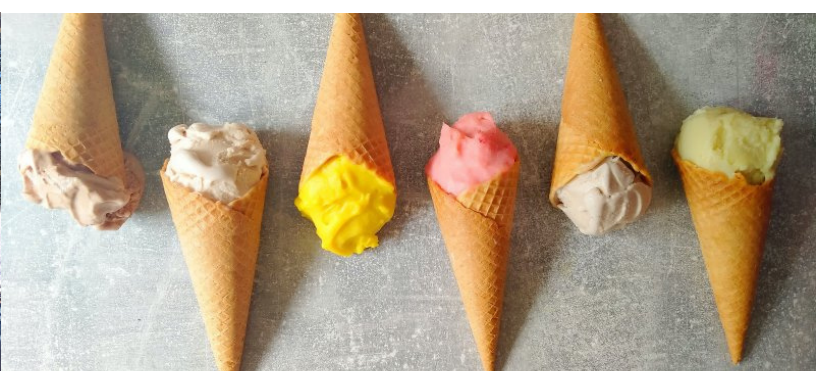


## COMPASSION SERVICE SATURDAY

The Outreach Committee is excited to host two more Service Saturdays in 2023. The first will be hosted by Compassion Ministries just down the road from First Pres on Austin Ave on August 19. Compassion is a ministry that helps families acquire sustainable housing. We'll gather in the Franklin parking lot at 9:40am before heading over to our shift from 10-12pm. We'll be helping our friends sort supplies available to the families that stay with them.

## OUTREACH FAIR

Mark your calendar for the Outreach Fair that will help to kick-off our 2023 Stewardship season here at First Pres Waco. FPC supports our outreach partners in a variety of ways: through financial gifts, through volunteering, and through creating opportunities to give visibility to their work. We hope you'll join us after worship on October 1st for lunch with our partners to learn more about their work and find out how you can get involved.



## HELP US BUILD A HOUSE (with Habitat for Humanity)!

The last Service Saturday of the year will be to work on a new home alongside Habitat for Humanity. You may remember that Habitat was our Easter Offering recipient this year. We'll gather at First Pres on Saturday, November 18 at 8:40am in the Franklin parking lot and drive to the work site together. Our shift lasts from 9-12pm. All volunteers must be at least 16 years of age.

## ICE CREAM SOCIAL

The Congregational Life Committee is excited to partner with the Watkins-Holleyman and Gingles families to host this year's Ice Cream Social on Sunday, September 10th. Keep your calendar marked and your eyes peeled for an exact time in next month's newsletter.

# AUGUST CALENDAR

4

## Wednesday, August 2

Worship Committee Meeting, 12pm

## Thursday, August 3

Personnel Committee Meeting, 12pm

## Friday, August 4

Reel Spirituality, 6pm - Pinewood

## Sunday, August 6

Worship, 8:30am - Sanctuary & Zoom

Christian Formation, 9:15am

Worship, 10:30am - Sanctuary & Zoom

## Monday, August 7

Diaconate Meeting, 5:30pm

## Tuesday, August 8

Faith on Tap, 6pm - Slow Rise on the Brazos

In Stone & Story Book Review - Part 4, 6:30pm

## Thursday, August 10

Annual Staff Retreat, 9am - 4pm - Office Holiday

## Sunday, August 13

Worship, 8:30am - Sanctuary & Zoom

Christian Formation, 9:15am

Worship, 10:30am - Sanctuary & Zoom

## Tuesday, August 15

This is First Pres, 5:30pm

## Wednesday, August 16

Administration & Finance Committee Meeting, 12pm

## Friday, August 18

Men's Breakfast, 7:30am

Reel Spirituality, 6pm - Pinewood

## Saturday, August 19

Service Saturday, meet at FPC at 9:40am

## Sunday, August 20

Worship, 8:30am - Sanctuary & Zoom

Christian Formation, 9:15am

Worship, 10:30am - Sanctuary & Zoom

## Monday, August 21

Session Meeting, 5:30pm

## Wednesday, August 23

Facilities Committee Meeting, 12pm

## Sunday, August 27

Worship, 8:30am - Sanctuary & Zoom

New Beginnings Breakfast, 9:15am

Worship, 10:30am - Sanctuary & Zoom

## Monday, August 28

Christian Formation Committee, 5:30pm

Youth Advisory Board Meeting, 6:30pm

Power of the Pen Meeting, 7pm

### Bell Choir Rehearsal

6:00pm on Wednesdays starting August 16



### Choir Rehearsal

7:00pm every Wednesday



### Honoring the Deceased & Baptized

Jim Zorn - June 28, 1932 - June 23, 2023

Elizabeth Zorn - March 27, 1933 - June 29, 2023

Miles Palm - Baptized on July 16, 2023



## *Birthdays and Anniversaries!*

**2** Lou Christian-Armstrong, Merry & Rick Bruner **4** Athena Langdell, Michael Muehlenbein **5** Adam Hamilton, Raeanna Moore **6** Melanie Millar **8** Lavinia Haltom, Linda Reed **9** Mary Henderson **10** LaRaine & Carr DuPuy **11** Matthew Davitashvili **12** Karter McNair, Hollyn McNair, Mabry McNair **13** Sue Weir **14** May Bolte, Olivia Morgan, Beth & Paul Hicks **15** Aleisha Green, Fuller Drew, Nancy & Drew Risinger **16** Triton Moore, Karl & Emily Stottlemire **17** Deana Johnson, Ian Odajima **19** Mandi & Cary DuPuy **20** Jackie Lott, Ella Harper, Andrew Davitashvili **21** Scott Wagner **22** Lesley McAllister **23** Charlotte Henderson, Jeremy Goodman, James Switzer **24** Kathleen Minshew, Jennifer Ferretter **25** Debbie Christensen, Camden McAllister **26** Mary Helen & David George **27** J.P. Davis **29** Beverley Durrett, Keri & Dan Knight **31** Marilyn Harren

# MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

## THE ESSENCE OF OUR INVITATION

After a season of Pandemic, long-covid, and interrupted habits, the pressure is on the church to ask ourselves important questions like, "What are we doing?" and "Why are we doing what we are doing?"

Like any organization, the "why?" of First Presbyterian undergirds all our "whats." It undergirds all our "doing." In our "why?," we can find the essence of our invitation to others.

First Presbyterian Church of Waco's "why?" is in her people. "If God so loved the world that God gave generously of Godself, then First Presbyterian seeks to give appropriately of her building space, legacy of saints and ground she holds. She seeks to do this in such a way that we love and honor one another, fully releasing human energy, imagination, intelligence and love to the world around us. This requires several things that are difficult to find elsewhere:

- Candor – we seek to be accurate in that say and honest about our wonderings and longings.
- We seek to know and be of service alongside free-thinking individuals ([www.steinbeckintheschools.com](http://www.steinbeckintheschools.com)) who long for community with all its accountability and corporate leverage.
- We carry a tone of joy and opportunity rather than guilt and obligation. We strive for this tone to pervade all of our speaking and doing.

As First Presbyterian we need to share our territory, space and legacy. We need to invite others who value: candor; free-thinking in community as well as a pervasive tone of joy and opportunity. Be imaging ways to do just this in your personal friendship and your social media presence. Church growth = sharing our most precious experiences with others.



### THIS IS FIRST PRES

Join Rev. Chris Palmer for informal conversation about First Presbyterian Church in Waco on Tuesday, August 15 from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM in Chapel Parlor. This is a great night for visitors and friends to meet others who are considering joining the church.

You will get a tour of the building, get to know each other better, get questions answered, and learn about the history of First Presbyterian!

## A NEW BEGINNING FOR MALORIE MONTOYA

It is with a tender heart that I will be reaching out and extending my gifts as a private school educator. I have resigned from my role as Director of Christian Formation, effective July 30. As I transition into this next opportunity, I want you all to know that your uniqueness, gratitude, and faith are qualities that go unmatched. I have thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of what it means to be the Director of Christian Formation and look forward to continuing to serve alongside you all as a member of the First Presbyterian Church Waco congregation.

“I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.” Psalm 32:8



With love and grace,  
Malorie



# CHRISTIAN FORMATION

## TOWN HALL

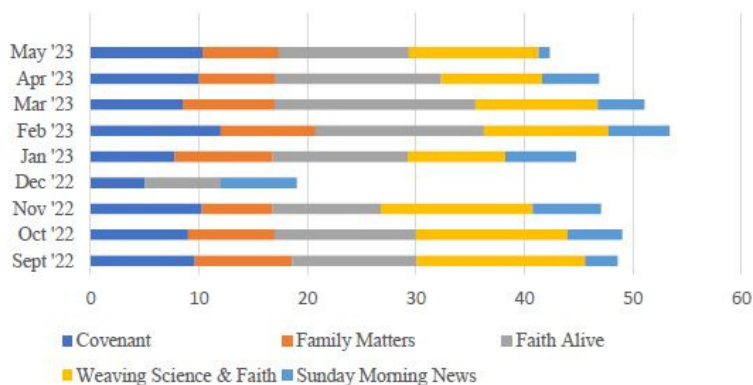
The Administration Committee of First Presbyterian Church’s Session announces a **Congregational Town Hall on Sunday morning August 6 beginning 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.** The congregation/worshipping community of First Presbyterian is ardently invited to attend a discussion regarding challenges and possibilities as it is related to Christian Formation and the traditional role it has played in the life of our congregation. Breakfast will be served. All adult Christian Formation classes are asked to be present as well as youth and children.



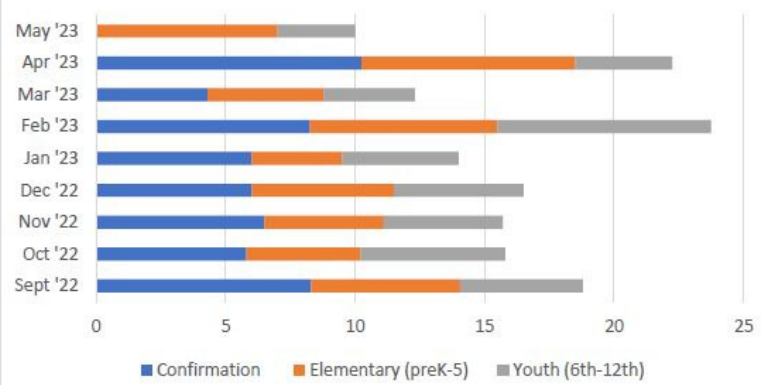
## TRENDS IN CHRISTIAN FORMATION

It's been a year full of fun, meaningful, and diverse conversations in Christian Formation on Sunday mornings. Check out the graphs below to see a weekly attendance breakdown through last year. Between September 2022 and May 2023, FPC averaged about 45 leaders and attendees in adult Sunday morning classes each week, with an added 16.5 in our children and youth programs. At the beginning of our 2022 year, we set the goal of getting 70 families involved in Christian Formation. By October we surpassed that goal, ending with a total of 76 family units rolling through these classes.

ADULT FORMATION 2022-23



CHILDREN & YOUTH AVERAGES



The Tower  
1100 Austin Avenue  
Waco, TX 76701  
(254) 752-1665  
www.firstpreswaco.org

Office Hours  
Monday - Friday  
9 AM - 12 PM & 1 PM - 4 PM

**Return Service Requested**



FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
Church of Waco

**Do you know a young adult looking to get plugged in to community? A great first step would be to check out Jacob's Ladder -- our monthly newsletter. Each issue features writings from a diverse set of interesting and relevant voices. To check out past issues, visit the "Young Adults" tab in our "Church Life" page. To subscribe, send an email to [cpalmer@firstpreswaco.org](mailto:cpalmer@firstpreswaco.org)**

# JOHN JOVICICH



## EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AUGUST 27



Our Children's Music Education is an important component to the children's Christian Formation experience here at First Pres.



John Jovicich, Children's Music Director, leads in many ways by teaching children traditional hymns, all the way to learning instruments, reading music, and creating a unique experience each Sunday.



John holds great compassion for music and the FPC children. You'll also see him in the choir loft on Sunday mornings.



Thank you, John, for your hard work and dedication!