

# Celtic Cross

The *Celtic Cross* is published once a month. News items intended for a specific issue should be submitted by noon on the Sunday prior to the last Wednesday of each month.

Vol. 63, No. 2

February 2026

Editor: Joshua Cossette

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Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian,

With February quickly approaching we definitely find ourselves in the “deep mid-winter.” I appreciate those of you who had to pivot due to the wintry weather postponing Sunday worship and my Installation Service. It will take place March 1st at 4:00 p.m. So please mark your calendars. Members of the Denton Bach Society will still be able to provide special music. The ensemble and their director have truly welcomed me into the group. I am continuing to connect with multiple ministry leaders within Denton, and throughout Grace Presbytery. Once our house-keeping efforts conclude in a few months this networking will assist the Session once we begin the actual work of the visioning process.

One housekeeping activity by the Session has included assessing our online presence. Currently, media platforms like Facebook and Instagram have become essential, rather than supplementary means of extending the vision of local churches. Over the last decade and a half families that are looking for a church to connect with began that search online, rather than in person.

The same has been exponentially true with several of our young adults. Session found this to be the case with the introduction to Presbyterians for the Kingdom shared by Richard and Anna Ackerman. The Monday morning after they met with us, I received multiple texts from other pastors impressed by your hospitality. Other visitors have commented how the website has been useful as a means of inviting them to come.

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This month we move further in the liturgical calendar and enter in the Lenten season beginning with the Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday February 18th. Providing we will have good weather the service will take place 6:30 pm in the evening – more details will come forth in the next week or so. During the Lenten season through Pentecost, my sermons will mostly derive from the Gospel selection from the Revised Common Lectionary. Observing this Lenten season serves as a means of joining with the worldwide body of Christ of reading and listening as a shared experience of encountering the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

As I observe the state of the affairs around us, and the importance of following Jesus' Great Commandment and Great Commission, it seemed appropriate that this Lenten season we lean not simply into What we are to be as followers of Jesus Christ, but more importantly to emphasize How, and even Why our behavior in following Jesus means as much, if not more, to our knowledge, or our "What." There is a wonderful quote accredited to former President Theodore Roosevelt that underscores this, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

This Lenten Season let us focus on how we are responding to the culture around us. Whatever choices we make verbally, or relationally with our words, our actions, or our inactions, do they point others to authority of Jesus Christ – who alone is the Lord of our conscience? Let us show them the depth of our knowledge and our care as we mirror to them the Savior, the Lord of our lives.

Transitions begin with an ending, and end in a new beginning. The Lenten season let us move from what we know about ourselves, and transition further into

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Ernest

## **Mission News**

The collection for Our Daily Bread was delivered by the Welborns. The updated church directory has been completed and distributed. Zip lock food bags were filled for those in need and are available for congregation members who desire to keep one in their cars for distribution.

Money from a Memorial Fund designated for missions has been allocated:

MoRanch- \$800.  
Presbyterian Children's Home- \$900  
Direction 61:3- \$1,000.  
Cumberland Children's Home-\$500  
Our Daily Bread. \$1,250  
Stepping Stones-\$950  
Interfaith Ministries- \$700  
Community Food Bank- \$900

Many thanks to Carol Nance who contributed 28 hand-crocheted warm scarves for those who visit the Food Pantry.

Growth and Outreach reported that the Inquirer's Class has two participants. The class completed their 4-week program in December.

Each month the Mission Committee would like to share information about one of the agencies assisted by First Presbyterian. This month we are featuring Stepping Stones. This agency provides free dementia support programs, activities and caregiver resources. They meet in Trinity Presbyterian Church. They offer support groups, nature walks, caregiver training, and family activities in Denton and Flower Mound.

Our own Linn Welborn serves as a volunteer and board member. In the past, members of our congregation have participated in the programs provided by Stepping Stones and received beneficial services. More information can be found on their website, [steppingstonesdenton.com](http://steppingstonesdenton.com), or on the mission bulletin board.



We already know that reading time is not only an educational experience for the students at Denton Christian Preschool but also a great time for us to bond together through the art of story telling. We all love it when Dr. Josh reads to us but we also had a surprise visit from Rev. Gardner for story time! After story time, Rev. Gardner made a point to give stickers to each class.

Moments like these remind us how meaningful shared experiences are in early childhood. Story time gives our students the chance to listen, imagine, and connect—not only with the stories themselves, but with the caring adults around them.





Clockwise, from top left:  
 Rev. Gardner reading to Mr. Nick's classroom; sticker time with Rev. Gardner in Mrs. Brown's classroom; learning our names with Rev. Gardner in Mrs. Liliana's classroom; the prayer garden filled with snow; looking towards the snowy roof of Erwin Hall after the snow storm

Opposite page, from top to bottom: Reading in Mrs. Liliana's classroom; handing stickers out in Mr. Nick's class while DCP Community Liaison Nancy Dobson watches; Rev. Gardner reading to Mrs. Brown's class



Ice still sparkles on the ground, but thankfully this storm was more of a pause than a problem. Years of winter weather have taught us valuable lessons, and this time we were ready. God's grace carried us through the cold days with fewer struggles than before. We're reminded that even icy seasons come with blessings—and a chance to trust Him more.





February 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM  	2	3 Women's Bible Study 10 AM	4	5 Mission Committee 2 PM	6	7 Officer Training 9:30 AM
8 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM	9	10 Session 7:00 PM	11 Louise Kraft Birthday	12	13	14
15 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM Celtic Cross Deadline	23 Deacons 11:00 AM	24	25 Women's Luncheon	26	27	28



With leis, laughter, and a little aloha, our Fellowship Luncheon was a wonderful time together. The Hawaiian-themed meal from Hawaiian Bros. gave us plenty to smile about. More than the food, it was the fellowship that filled the room with joy and gratitude. We're thankful for a community where faith, friendship, and fun come together so naturally.

Clockwise, from top to bottom:

Rev. Gardner with the Mehaffey family at the Aloha Fellowship. Look at that classy bow-tie!

The dessert spread from the fellowship luncheon. Yummy!

Some of our younger crowd enjoying the feast and fellowship

Where faith, friendship, and a little island flair meet together at FPC





This month, we were honored to welcome special guests Richard Ackerman, widely known as “Redeemed Zoomer”, and his wife Anna for a meaningful time of conversation and encouragement. Together, they shared their work with Presbyterians for the Kingdom (PFTK), a movement dedicated to reviving and renewing the PCUSA denomination. They spoke passionately about the importance of expanding churches’ reach online and creating opportunities for younger generations to engage with the Church—both in person and virtually. Their message emphasized remaining rooted in biblical truth while embracing new ways to share faith. Through thoughtful discussion, they inspired our community to consider how innovation and tradition can work together for God’s kingdom. We are deeply grateful for their visit and the encouragement, vision, and insight they brought.

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## In the Kitchen

In 2002, Presbyterian Women at First Presbyterian Church published the revised edition of “In the Kitchen,” their favorite recipes. The first edition was published in 1993. The ladies of the church, and some men, provided their favorite recipes.

I hope you enjoy looking back at these glimpses of times past.

### Pork Chop Potato Bake (page 159)

- 6 pork chops
- 6 c. thinly sliced potatoes
- 1½ c. onion
- 1½ (10½) cans condensed celery soup
- 2½ c. boiling water



Peel and slice potatoes and onions. Combine ingredients in a low 2 quart baking dish. Mix celery soup and boiling water together. Pour over the vegetables. Cover and bake 1 hour at 350°. Remove excess fat from 6 rib loin or shoulder pork chops cut ½ inch thick. Partly brown them; place on top of the potatoes. Bake, uncovered for 30 minutes.

Gladys Winingham



# Households for Prayer

Let us continue to uphold our households in prayer with these members for

February 2026

Alexandria Nicholson  
Terry and Marlene Nobles  
Loretta Norton  
John Pinder  
Hal and Pat Reed  
Irene Rodriguez  
Judy Royal  
Jann Sanders

## CHURCH STAFF

*Rev. Ernest L. Gardner III, Pastor*  
*Joshua Cossette, Office Manager*  
*Beverly Hoch, Music Director*  
*Dr. Joan Hubbard, Pianist/Organist*  
*Mike Steinel, Trumpeter*  
*John Pinder, AV Technician - Irene Rodriguez, Church Caretaker*

Office Hours: Office Manager, Mon-Fri 9—2 PM  
Pastor Mon-Thurs 10 AM—2 PM  
Emergencies/after hours: 940-300-9748 (Elder Mike Steinel)  
CCLI #1859917

## Friend us on Facebook

FPC: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FPCDentonTX/>

FPC Presbyterian Women: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PWDentonFPC/>





## Prayer Concerns

**Health Concerns:** Cheryl B, Gerald B, Helen B, Jan C, Lynda E, Valorie F, Pat H, Larry H, Jim K, Loretta N, Irene R, David S, Jann S, Scott S; Dirk, Michael, Emma, Jess, Sara, Kayla A, Mike B, Sarah C, Shirley and Mike C, Lisa C, Larry C, Sherman C, Mr. Cox, Mary F, Mary G, Charlie H, Sharon H, BL J, John K, Clarice M, Martha M, Maya M, Miyako N, Brad S, Charles and Sharon V

**Continuing Prayers** for those in long-term care residences: Pat and Hal R (Austin)

**Other Prayer Needs:** Elizabeth M, Cathy T

# Birthdays

# *Anniversaries*

11 Louise Kraft



No Anniversaries

**Find us on the web:**

<http://www.fpcdenton.org>



Please consider supporting the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church with your financial gift.

<https://fpcdenton.org/give/>



**Bible Readings  
February 2026**

- 1 Mark 8:22–30
- 2 John 6:27–40
- 3 John 6:41–51
- 4 John 6:52–59
- 5 John 6:60–71
- 6 John 7:1–13
- 7 John 7:14–36
- 8 Mark 10:13–22
- 9 John 7:37–52
- 10 John 7:53–8:11
- 11 John 8:12–20
- 12 John 8:21–32
- 13 John 8:33–47
- 14 John 8:47–59
- 15 Luke 9:18–27
- 16 John 18:15–18, 25–27
- 17 John 18:28–38
- 18 Luke 18:9–14
- 19 John 17:1–8
- 20 John 17:9–19
- 21 John 17:20–26
- 22 John 12:44–50
- 23 Mark 1:1–13
- 24 Mark 1:14–28
- 25 Mark 1:29–45
- 26 Mark 2:1–12
- 27 Mark 2:13–22
- 28 Mark 2:23–3:6

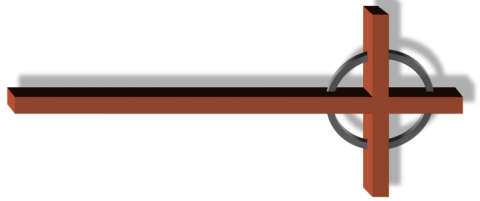
Source: PC(USA) Common  
Lectionary

**Aerobics**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
Erwin Hall - 8:30 am

**Office Hours**

Office Manager M-F - 9:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Pastor M-Th 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
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