

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.

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April 2026

Editor: Joshua Cossette

Dear members and friends of First Presbyterian,

By the time you receive this edition of *The Celtic Cross*, we will be entering Holy Week. While observance of Holy Week was not emphasized by early Reformers such as Calvin and Knox, this season invites us into a meaningful progression of events that deepen our awareness of God's work in our lives—a theme Calvin himself highlights in the opening of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

In a world marked by constant change, especially here in Denton County and across DFW, we are reminded that God alone is unchanging—complete, whole, and holy. Yet each year many of us approach Lent and Holy Week with the same expectations. Is it fear of the unknown, or fear of being fully known by God? Scripture repeatedly reminds us that hiding from God only distances us from the wholeness and renewal God offers through faith in Jesus Christ.

Throughout Holy Week, even Jesus' closest disciples had their expectations transformed beyond imagination. As we move toward the celebration of the Resurrection on April 3, I invite you to join us for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Morning, and to reflect on how encounters with Christ continue to change the lives of those around us.

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At First Presbyterian Church, much is happening—not for the sake of change itself, but to more effectively share the Gospel with residents, students, and visitors in Denton. One simple but powerful step you can offering is inviting a friend or neighbor to worship. That invitation is an act of trust and discipleship. I am doing this myself, and I invite you to join me.

Jesus modeled a ministry of disciples who make disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples, (you get the idea). Imagine how meaningful this Lenten season could be as God uses worship and community to address the needs already present in people's hearts, renewing and reforming us through the Living Word of God by the voice of the Holy Spirit. As Scripture reminds us, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Ernest

As we enter Holy Week, we come to an important time in the life of the Church—a week that helps us slow down and reflect on the final days of Jesus’ earthly ministry. While not always emphasized in every tradition, Holy Week provides a simple and meaningful way to walk through the story of Christ, beginning with Palm Sunday. On that day, Jesus enters Jerusalem to celebration and expectation, reminding us how quickly our own expectations can shape the way we see Him.

As the week continues, the tone begins to shift. Maundy Thursday recalls Jesus sharing a meal with His disciples and calling them to love and serve one another. Good Friday then brings us to the cross, where we remember Christ’s sacrifice. These moments are familiar, but they give us space each year to pause and consider what they mean for our own lives and faith.

Holy Week ultimately leads us to Easter and the hope of the Resurrection. In the middle of busy schedules and changing seasons, this week gives us a chance to refocus on what remains constant—God’s work in and through Christ. As you move through the week, consider joining in worship and perhaps inviting someone to come along. Sometimes the simplest steps can be the most meaningful.

Blessings,
Dr. Joshua Cossette

Session		
Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Carolyn Smith (T)(C)	Paul Mehaffey	Judy Royal
Jim Welborn	David Storrie (T)	Mike Steinel (T)
Diaconate		
Scott Starkweather	Katherine Mehaffey	Diana Shenberger
(T) Trustee	(M) Moderator	(C) Clerk of Session

Alpha Course

The Mission Committee has been evaluating the Alpha Course. Alpha is an experience that unpacks the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. It's for anyone who's curious, no matter their beliefs or background. Each session unpacks a different question around the Christian faith.

Alpha is primarily designed for non-believers who are curious or interested. The course can also be used to help believers reinforce their faith and to learn tools to use when interacting with non-believers.

Alpha courses are presented all over the world and help many find their faith. We are considering presenting a course in the future that would be open to the public, but first want to present it within our congregation. Hopefully familiarity with the course will foster greater support for presentations open to the public, and will provide a learning opportunity for our members who may wish to be involved in future presentations.

We have decided to present the course, first to church leaders (session and diaconate), during the Bible Study hour on Sunday mornings beginning April 12, 2026. The course will run for approximately fifteen weeks. Each week's topic builds on the previous topics, but attendance is not mandatory and missed sessions can be made up if desired.

We hope to offer a course later in the year for church members.

We ask that the congregation please pray for us as we embark on this learning adventure and outreach opportunity.

If you wish to learn more about Alpha, please visit their website at:
<https://www.alpha.org/>.

Jim Welborn
Mission Committee

Happy Spring!

We are excited to launch our Spring Plant Fundraiser! Please find the full details in the attached document. We would appreciate it if you could help us spread the word by sharing this fundraiser with your friends, family, and community.

After the success of last year's beautiful, healthy plants, many of you asked if we would host this event again, and we are thrilled to do so.

If you would like assistance filling out your order form, you may call Nancy directly. We accept payment in advance or at the time of pickup via cash, check, or credit card.

Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm!

Warm regards and happy planting,
Nancy

Denton Christian Preschool's **Spring Plant Fundraiser** is a wonderful way to support environmental awareness and early education for our children.

If you'd prefer not to purchase plants but would still like to contribute, you can make a donation to the school by going to the link below. Your support helps our little learners grow and thrive!

<https://wl.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E348327&id=4>



Preorders Due Friday, April 10
We will call for pick-up the week of April 20
Pick up at 1114 W. University Dr.
Questions?
Contact Nancy (940) 383-3332 or
dcpcommunityliaison@gmail.com

Spring Fundraiser

18 Count Flats \$23

 Angelonia Mix	 Begonia Mix	 Coleus Mix	 Dusty Miller
 Impatiens Mix	 Lantana Red	 Lantana Sunrise	 Lantana Yellow
 Pentas Mix	 Portulaca Mix	 Potato Vine Blackie	 Potato Vine Green
 Vinca Mix	 Salvia-Victoria Blue	 Scaevola Blue	 Zinnia Mix

1 Gallon Grass \$12



Purple Fountain

10" Color Baskets \$27



Sun Basket



April 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 OBD Spring Collection (Begin Collection)	2 Maundy Thursday Service and Meal 6:00 PM	3 Larry and Pat Harberson Anniversary Good Friday Service 12:00 PM	4
5 Early Service 9:00 AM Easter Breakfast 10 AM Worship 11 AM 	6	7 Women's Bible Study 10 AM	8	9 Steve Smith Birthday	10 Jim Welborn Birthday	11
12 Alpha Course 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM	13	14	15 Session 7:00 PM	16	17	18
19 Alpha Course 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM Mission Committee 12 N	20 Deacons 11:00 AM	21	22	23	24	25
26 Alpha Course 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM Celtic Cross Deadline	27 Judy Royal Birthday	28	29 Women's Luncheon 11:30 AM <i>North Point Cafe 2000 West University</i>	30		

Mission News

Beginning in April First Presbyterian will collect items needed by the clients of Our Daily Bread for the summer months. A collection box will be placed in the Narthex to receive your donations. A list of items most needed at this time will also be available in the Narthex. Items will be delivered to the site in May.

Earlier this month, we were grateful to finally gather for the Installation Service of our pastor, Rev. Ernest Gardner. Originally planned for February, the service was postponed due to winter weather, but the delay made the opportunity to come together all the more meaningful.

An installation service is a special moment in the life of a church, marking the formal covenant between a pastor and congregation. It is both a celebration and a commitment—recognizing God's call to ministry and the shared work of serving Christ together. It was a joy to worship alongside one another and give thanks for the ways God has already been at work in our church.

We are truly blessed by Rev. Gardner's leadership, faithfulness, and care for this congregation. This service was a reminder of the strong foundation being built and the opportunities ahead as we continue in ministry together. We give thanks for this time of celebration and look forward with hope to what God has in store.



Admin and Finance News

Firstly, a big **THANK YOU** to our generous members at FPC-Denton! We have received 15 pledges. Eleven pledgers increased their pledges for 2026!

Furthermore, 2026's pledge commitments total \$110,773 vs 2025's \$88,220. You all really stepped up!

Praise God!

Carolyn Smith, A&F Chair

Deacon News

The deacons conducted their semi-annual food drive collection on Sunday, March 1st.

We collected \$810 for the Denton Community Food Center (DCFC) helping combat food insecurity.

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.

Jim Welborn

Eddye's Dip

(page 21)

1 small can shrimp, drained and chopped
1 small ct. sour cream
1 env. Good Seasons Italian salad dressing mix
Cayenne pepper to taste

Mix together. Chill and serve with crackers or chips.

Eddye Hockaday



Households for Prayer

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

April 2026

Cathy Taylor
Jim and Linn Welborn
Beverly Westlake
Ted Wilkinson
Helen Beck
Chris, Keely and Parker Briggs
Clay, Kelly, Charlie and Luke Briggs
Gerald and Cherly Briggs

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, Louise K, Loretta N, David S, Jann S, Scott S; Amber, Dirk, Taylor, Shirley and Mike C, Lisa C, Larry C, Sherman C, Mr. Cox, Mary F, John K, Miyako N, Brad S

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

Other Prayer Needs: Elizabeth M, Cathy T

Sympathy: Family and friends of Mike B

Birthdays

Anniversaries

9 Steve Smith

10 Jim Welborn

27 Judy Royal

3 Larry and Pat Harberson



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

April 2026

- 1 Mark 12:1–11
- 2 Mark 14:12–25
- 3 John 19:38–42
- 4 Rom. 8:1–11
- 5 John 20:19–23
- 6 Mark 16:1–8
- 7 Mark 16:9–20
- 8 Matt. 28:1–16
- 9 Matt. 28:16–20
- 10 Luke 24:1–12
- 11 Mark 12:18–27
- 12 John 14:1–7
- 13 John 14:(1–7) 8–17
- 14 John 14:18–31
- 15 John 15:1–11
- 16 John 15:12–27
- 17 John 16:1–15
- 18 John 16:16–33
- 19 Mark 16:9–20
- 20 Matt. (1:1–17) 3:1–6
- 21 Matt. 3:7–12
- 22 Matt. 3:13–17
- 23 Matt. 4:1–11
- 24 Matt. 4:12–17
- 25 Matt. 4:18–25
- 26 Mark 6:30–44
- 27 Matt. 5:1–10
- 28 Matt. 5:11–16
- 29 Matt. 5:17–20
- 30 Matt. 5:21–26

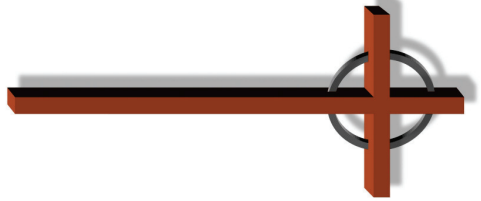
Source: PC(USA) Common
Lectionary

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
Office Phone - 940.387.3894
Fax - 940.387.3877
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