

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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July 2026

Editor: Joshua Cossette

Happy 250th Anniversary – Celebrate Freedom!

WHAT IS THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY THING YOU CAN DO?

Yes, this July 4th will be an event some will remember years from now. I still have my encased Bicentennial Quarter, a gift from my third-grade teacher. Texans continue to look back with affection on their own history of independence and those who fought for freedom. This year's 250th celebration helps us look even further back to understand what freedom meant to colonial residents in the 1770s. We remember significant individuals who "gave up their lives and their sacred honor" for the cause of freedom. Therefore, it is important to see how the spirit of "all men created equal" came to rest here, in contrast to France.

Rev. Alexander Craighead was a Presbyterian pastor who, despite a somewhat dubious standing with his Philadelphia Presbytery, preached and planted a number of churches in the 1750s that continue today. His motto throughout the colonies was "No King, but Christ!" This message was not respected by the English Crown or its colonial government. It highlighted injustices felt by many colonists in the years leading toward the American Revolution. Rev. Craighead's motto was not his own, for it continues to resonate with the Gospel then and today.

If you were a Presbyterian, Quaker, or Baptist in those days, you were called a "dissenter" because your faith led you to "dissent" against the authority of the Church of England (the State Church), which some believed had circumvented the authority of Jesus Christ—therefore, "No King, but Christ." Royal law required all citizens to attend worship each Sunday morning in the local Church of England parish, though as a dissenter you could also attend Sunday evening worship at a meetinghouse. This meant Presbyterians gave once to the royal church, and again if they wanted a Presbyterian pastor. What made the difference between the two pastors?

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Whether for a house church or a congregation, Presbyterian pastors were brought across the Atlantic to teach the Word of God and administer the sacraments. Those of means brought a Presbyterian pastor to ensure their children learned to read and write, primarily so they could understand the Scriptures. These pastor-scholar-tutors helped shape the first forms of public school education in America.

While the Church of England emphasized being a good citizen on earth, living a moral life, and appearing good outwardly, guided by the Book of Common Prayer, Presbyterians took more seriously the freedom received in Jesus Christ rather than by the Crown. Their understanding of freedom as a God-given gift, including personal and corporate accountability, extended to all classes (though limited to Caucasian men at the time) and seemed to rise especially among Presbyterian congregations known for emphasizing the Word of God as their “only infallible rule in faith and practice.”

Think of how differently freedom made its mark in France shortly after victory at Yorktown. There, freedom led to anarchy and fear. John Adams may have summarized the difference in what freedom meant in America: “*Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.*”

This week our denomination will meet to discern the course of various motions sent from presbyteries (regional bodies of elders and pastors). They need our prayers for such a grueling marathon. In my own experience at GA, with eyes shut, it can sound very similar to a national meeting of the two main U.S. political parties.

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My prayer is that those who maintain a tight allegiance to the institution of the PCUSA (like a political party) would relax their grip and be moved by the Spirit, who frees us not for our own ends (anarchy), but for a freedom founded and fulfilled in Christ alone.

What is the most revolutionary thing you can do, friends? It **begins** by spending 10–15 minutes a day reading God’s Word. As you read, listen for the ways the passage leads you away from bondage or inadequacy and frees you to live in joyful celebration that you have access to the Maker of Heaven and Earth. Then close with a brief prayer of thanks for God’s presence, guidance, and comfort amid the cares of the moment.

May “No King, but Christ” be more than a slogan; may it be an affirmation and awakening that freedom is not free—it came at the cost of Jesus’ sacrifice upon the cross. May all who call for freedom first submit their allegiance to Him.

America the Beautiful

*Our fathers' God, to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.*

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Ernest

Summer at FPC Denton

Summer often brings a different rhythm to life—longer days, warmer weather, and opportunities to reconnect with one another in new ways. Here at FPC Denton, the season is already filled with meaningful moments of learning, fellowship, and growth. From opportunities to deepen our faith to new ways of serving and connecting, we invite you to take a look at what's happening in the life of our church this month and discover a way to be part of what God is doing in our community this summer.

Summer Bible Study with the Pastor

Wednesday mornings have become a special time of fellowship, learning, and spiritual growth at FPC Denton. Our Summer Bible Study with the Pastor is off to a wonderful start, and the group continues to grow as more people discover this midweek opportunity to gather around God's Word. The atmosphere is welcoming and relaxed—what some have affectionately begun calling our "Midweek Oasis."

Each Wednesday at 10:00 AM, the group enjoys thoughtful discussion, meaningful fellowship, and a chance to pause and be refreshed in the middle of the week. It's welcoming, engaging, and yes—there are treats!

Can't make it in person? Join online through Zoom. The 9:45 AM check-in link is available on the church website each week. Whether you've attended every session or haven't joined us yet, there's always room for one more. We hope you'll join us!

Growing Beauty in the Prayer Garden

Something new is beginning to bloom in the Prayer Garden at FPC Denton.

Our Office Manager, Dr. Josh, has started a gardening project by planting marigolds from his own home garden. These bright flowers are the first step in a larger effort to bring new color and beauty to this peaceful space.

More flowers and plants are planned throughout the garden in the coming months, helping create an even more welcoming place for prayer, reflection, and quiet moments with God. As the garden continues to grow, we look forward to seeing it blossom into a beautiful reminder of God's creativity and care.

CPR Classes Bring Life-Saving Skills to Our Community

FPC Denton is excited to be offering CPR certification classes this summer through our partnership with Nations Best CPR. These classes are held right here at the church twice each month, providing a convenient opportunity for both our congregation and the wider community to learn valuable life-saving skills.

Upcoming July class dates are:

- July 9, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- July 23, 10:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Participants may choose between Adult CPR Certification (\$88) or Adult & Pediatric CPR Certification (\$108). Whether you are a parent, grandparent, teacher, caregiver, or simply someone who wants to be prepared, these classes offer practical training that could one day save a life.

Registration links are available through church communications and social media. We encourage everyone to consider taking advantage of this opportunity to learn the basics of First Aid and CPR. As a church, we are called to care for one another, and learning First Aid and CPR is one meaningful way we can do just that. You never know when these skills may be needed—but having them could help save a life.



Left: A close up of the marigold flower from Dr. Josh's garden.



Right: One of the marigold transplants from Dr. Josh's garden

July 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Pastor's Bible Study 10A Scott Starkweather Birth- day Jim and Sally Callahan Anniversary David and Nancy Storrie Anniversary	2	3	4
5 ALPHA Course 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM 	6 Diana and Ron Shenberger Anniversary	7	8 Pastor's Bible Study 10A Session 7:00 PM	9 CPR Class 1 PM-4 PM (Conf)	10	11 Carol Nance Birthday
12 ALPHA Course 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM	13	14	15 Pastor's Bible Study 10A	16	17	18 Glenna Kirkpatrick Birth- day
19 ALPHA Course 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM Mission Committee 12 N	20	21 Lynelle McConnell Birthday	22 Pastor's Bible Study 10A	23 CPR Class 10:30 AM-1:30 PM (Conf)	24	25 Carolyn and Steve Smith Anniversary
26 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM Celtic Cross Deadline	27 Deacons 11:00 AM	28	29 Pastor's Bible Study 10A Women' Lunch 11:30 AM	30	31	

Mission News

The Alpha Class sponsored by the Mission Committee is going well and will be completed mid-summer. Sign-up for the second session of the Alpha Class is now underway.

The Mission Committee and the Deacons will be working together to provide some Visitor Bags to be distributed to model homes in the area. Pastor Ernest will work with local realtors to determine the best places for distribution. The bags will include information about FPC and discount coupons for nearby businesses.

The Little Free Pantry continues to receive many donations from community members as well as FPC. The pantry is used daily by food insecure people in Denton. Products always needed are baby food and diapers, feminine hygiene products, and non-perishable foods.

Bags of emergency foods are available for distribution when those in need come to the church.

Disciple's Class Resumes

The ALPHA course will end on July 19 and the Disciple's Class will resume on July 26. We will resume the LifeGuide series study of Luke. The study will resume with lesson 17, "Parable of Two Lost Sons" - Luke 15. The study will be held in room 120 of the educational wing. Returning participants should bring their study guides. Study Guides are available for new participants.

ALPHA Course

A new ALPHA Course will begin on Sunday August 16 and run through November 1. The course will be presented on Sundays during the Bible Study Hour - 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM, with one all day Saturday presentation of 4 videos (meals provided). The course will be presented in the conference room. Interested parties may sign the signup sheet, or contact Jim Welborn to sign up or inquire.



On the last Wednesday of each month, the women of FPC Denton gather for fellowship, laughter, and meaningful conversation as we grow together in faith and friendship. Our next Ladies Luncheon will be Wednesday, July 29 at 11:30 AM at The Great Egg. We invite all women to join us for this special time of community and encouragement in Christ.

On the left, Rev. Ellen is pictured with the usual crew at her first Ladies Luncheon.

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

Herb Vinaigrette Dressing

(page 78)

- 1/4 c. salad oil
- 1/3 c. white wine vinegar or vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. snipped fresh or 1/4 tsp. dried herb (oregano, thyme or basil)
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- 1/4 tsp. dry mustard or 1 tsp. Dijon-style mustard (optional)
- 1/8 tsp. pepper



Combine all ingredients in a screw-top jar. Cover and shake well to mix. Store in refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Shake before serving. Makes 3/4 cup.

Martha Storrie

Households for Prayer

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

July 2026

Insook Melton
Carol Nance
Alexandria Nicholson
Terry and Marlene Nobles
Loretta Norton
John Pinder
Hal and Pat Reed
Irene Rodriquez

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 9-3, Tue-Wed 9-4, Fri 9-2
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: Beverly Hoch, Glenn Pearrow, Michael Stroud, Rachel Buchanan, Romel Martinez, Cheryl B, Gerald B, Helen B, Jan C, Lynda E, Pat H, Larry H, Jim K, Louise K, Loretta N, David S, Jann S; Amber, Dirk, Mary Shirley and Mike C, Larry C, Sherman C, Mr. Cox, Valorie F, John K, Miyako N, Brad S

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

Sympathy: Family and friends of Richard Lehrman, the family of Phil Reese

Other Prayer Needs: Cathy T

Birthdays *Anniversaries*

- 1 Scott Starkweather
- 11 Carol Nance
- 18 Glenna Kirkpatrick
- 21 Lynelle McConnell



- 1 Jim and Sally Callahan
- 1 David and Nancy Storrie
- 6 Diana and Ron Shenberger
- 25 Carolyn and Steve Smith

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

July 2026

- 1 Matt. 21:33–46
- 2 Matt. 22:1–14
- 3 Matt. 22:15–22
- 4 Matt. 22:23–40
- 5 Mark 1:14–20
- 6 Matt. 23:1–12
- 7 Matt. 23:13–26
- 8 Matt. 23:27–39
- 9 Matt. 24:1–14
- 10 Matt. 24:15–31
- 11 Matt. 24:32–51
- 12 Mark 1:21–27
- 13 Matt. 25:1–13
- 14 Matt. 25:14–30
- 15 Matt. 25:31–46
- 16 Matt. 26:1–16
- 17 Matt. 26:17–25
- 18 Matt. 26:26–35
- 19 Mark 2:1–12
- 20 Matt. 26:36–46
- 21 Matt. 26:47–56
- 22 Matt. 26:57–68
- 23 Matt. 26:69–75
- 24 Matt. 27:1–10
- 25 Matt. 27:11–23
- 26 Mark 2:23–28
- 27 Matt. 27:24–31
- 28 Matt. 27:32–44
- 29 Matt. 27:45–54
- 30 Matt. 27:55–66
- 31 Matt. 28:1–10

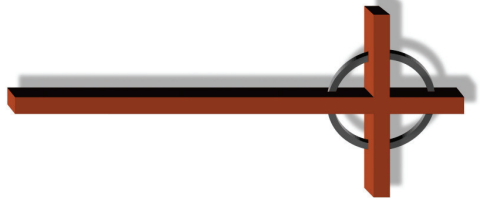
Source: PC(USA) Common
Lectionary

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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