

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. 8

August 2026

Editor: Joshua Cossette

Dear friends and members of First Presbyterian Church,

I pray each of you are doing your best to keep cool and hydrated during these very hot days. Reverend Ellen and I are acclimating ourselves to these kind of temperatures whereas last year in Philadelphia we had only two days over 100° Fahrenheit. But as schools begin to return back to classrooms, I feel an excitement for the coming year, especially with our ALPHA class beginning August 16th.

As a means of collaboration, our sermon series for the next several weeks will mirror scriptures from each week's study of ALPHA. This program is often described as a basic course in Christianity. But I hope that you will find it is not only an opportunity to learn or relearn the basics about God's desire for each one created in God's image. Even more how that relationship is redeemed through faith in Jesus Christ so we may become the truest version of ourselves, just as the Creator intended.

Speaking as your pastor, the real goal of this church hosting ALPHA is a means to help strengthen our ability to bear witness to God's grace in our everyday living. Because there are poignant moments in our comings and goings. As we become better acquainted with the truths of God presented in the scriptures, it is God who creates convergences between ourselves and a friend - or even a stranger with the knowledge that they are loved by God. This is the kind of message we can carry wherever we go -whether we are prepared or not because God is creating these encounters. All we need to do is to remain open to the *holy nudges* of the Holy Spirit. Please go to <https://alphausa.org/> to learn more.

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The Wednesday “Revisit the Sermon” Bible Study has been a most refreshing time of prayer, reflection and study. Our group has not made plans as of yet, but the time together has been a joy for all in attendance.

I want to celebrate with the Session the completion, and or near completion, of several projects around the church property. These items include the Erwin hall roof, replacing the front Erwin hall doors, a new contract for our HVAC system, and newly repaired lighting systems up front. Each of one of these updates show an increased readiness for ministry for and with our community.

We continue to strengthen our connections with students, faculty and staff from both UNT and TWU campuses. Later this month, for the first time ever, one of the Vocal ensembles at UNT will hold their fall retreat here at FPC. I am greatly encouraged by a number of students who have expressed their interest in participating in the ALPHA class. Still others alerted me their intention of developing this budding small group from last spring. Your active hospitality has been no small part in this group flourishing. Please be in prayer for our incoming students as they begin a new year full of experiences that can interpret their own walk with Christ.

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Jesus holds a vision for his church for God's glory so that we may live it and enjoy it forever. Now that a large part of some "housekeeping items" have been assessed and addressed, we launch into a new school and academic year with greater boldness and confidence in effective ministry. From the corner of W. University and Hinkle, the Gospel of Jesus Christ extends to the stranger, and friend alike that we may live into the vision Jesus holds for this body, and for each of our lives!

Keep cool and carry on!

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Ernest

As we make our way through the dog days of summer, the Texas heat reminds us to slow down, care for one another, and look ahead with anticipation. Before long, our preschool will once again be filled with the sounds of eager young learners, and students from UNT and TWU will return for another academic year. Each new season brings fresh opportunities to welcome, encourage, and support those who pass through our doors. Whether they come seeking a place to learn, create, worship, or simply belong, First Presbyterian Church continues to be a place where hospitality reflects God's love.

Summer also offers us a chance to pause and notice God's faithfulness in both the ordinary and the extraordinary moments. As we prepare for the ministries and opportunities of the coming months, may we remain open to the ways God is already at work in our community. A kind word, a welcoming smile, or a simple act of service can become an invitation for someone to experience Christ's love. As fall approaches, may we look forward with grateful hearts, ready to share the hope we have been given and to be faithful stewards of the place God has entrusted to us.

Blessings,
Dr. Joshua Cossette

Mission News

Mission committee recently invited representatives from Interfaith Denton (formerly Interfaith Ministries) to present a "Minute for Mission". They shared their service to the Denton community.

The current Alpha Program, being presented on Sunday mornings, has ended. A second program will be starting August 16th. The current program was well received by the participants.

The food pantry is still being filled and used regularly by church members and the community. The pantry and trash bin recently got a much needed washing. New mission ideas include, looking into how the church can help the school children suffering from food insecurity and offering a Balance Class, for fall risk individuals.



As fireworks light the night sky and communities gather to celebrate, America marks a historic milestone: 250 years as the United States of America.

This anniversary is a chance to reflect on our nation's enduring spirit, the freedoms we cherish, and the generations who have helped shape our country. Though we may have different viewpoints, we remain one people, united by a shared history and a shared future.



As the Pledge of Allegiance reminds us, we are "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." May this celebration inspire gratitude for our past and hope for the generations still to come.

Happy 250th Birthday, America!



From top left to bottom left

Gathering together for fellowship

Fellowship was in full swing as guests enjoyed music, great food, and one another's company.

Good friends, great music, and sweet treats—another successful Ice Cream Sundae Sunday!

Look at all that cold, delicious ice cream!

Opposite page:

Fireworks from the Denton Fairgrounds

The July 19 BBQ and Ice Cream Social was another wonderful afternoon of great food, laughter, and even better fellowship as friends, families, and neighbors gathered for the 4th Annual Ice Cream Sundae Sunday.

Our congregants and guests enjoyed a delicious barbecue meal before cooling off with homemade ice cream sundaes topped with all their favorite fixings. While the food was certainly a highlight, the opportunity to visit, reconnect, and spend time together made the day even more special.

Thank you to everyone who attended and to the volunteers who helped make this year's event another sweet success. We look forward to making even more memories together next year!



August 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM 	3	4	5	6 B.K. Schlesinger Birthday	7	8
9 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM	10 Terry and Marlene Nobles Anniversary	11 Session 7:00 PM	12	13	14	15
16 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM Mission Committee 12N	16	18	19	20	21	22
23 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM Celtic Cross Deadline	24 Deacons 11:00 AM	25	26 Women' Lunch 11:30 AM <i>North Point Café</i> <i>2000 W University Dr</i> Beverly Hoch Birthday	27	28	29
30 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM	31 Chris Briggs Birthday					

Calendar Items

As many of you know, our church has partnered with Nation's Best CPR to offer American Red Cross CPR certification classes right here on campus. Upcoming classes will be held **August 6, August 20, and September 10, from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM in the Conference Room**. Participants may choose between Adult CPR Certification or Adult & Pediatric CPR Certification, with certifications valid for two years. Registering is quick and easy through the American Red Cross website. Whether you're renewing your certification or learning this lifesaving skill for the first time, we encourage you to take advantage of this convenient opportunity.

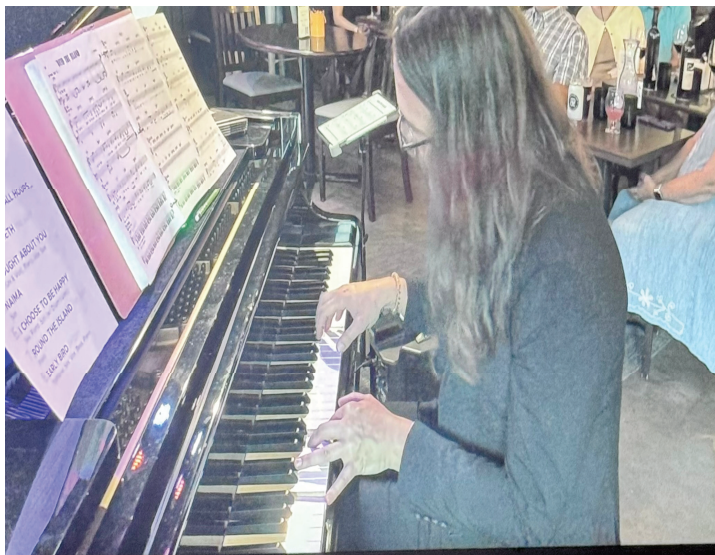
The Alpha Course will be starting up again on August 16th and will continue through November 1st. Alpha is an opportunity to explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open and welcoming environment. Designed especially for those who are curious about faith, Alpha provides a space for honest conversations and meaningful questions. It is also a wonderful opportunity for believers to strengthen their own faith and learn tools for sharing with others.

As we begin offering Alpha within our congregation, we hope this experience will help build familiarity with the course and encourage future opportunities to open Alpha to the wider community. At the same time, the Disciple's Class will be resuming and will continue its study of the Gospel of Luke. **Please note that both classes will be held concurrently at 9:30 AM.**

The Denton Bach Society is beginning another exciting season, with rehearsals starting Tuesday, August 18th. This year's theme, "**Bach Around the World**," promises to bring a wonderful variety of music and inspiration.

First Presbyterian will host the Denton Bach Society concert on **October 4th**, which also falls on **World Communion Sunday**. The music presented by DBS is always well received and appreciated by audiences. Looking ahead, DBS will also present a special performance on **Sunday, December 13th**, featuring the legendary composition *Messiah* by G.F. Handel. This season promises to be a fruitful and memorable one!

Even though summer is a time for rest, travel, and enjoying the slower pace of the season, there is still much happening behind the scenes as we prepare for the months ahead. From classes and learning opportunities to music and fellowship, our church continues to grow, connect, and plan meaningful ways to serve and gather together. We look forward to all that is coming and hope you will be part of these opportunities!



Our office manager, Dr. Josh, is not only an essential part of our church staff but also a talented musician who generously shares his gifts with others. Recently, he performed at Steve's Wine Bar, where his music was enjoyed by a well-attended crowd of church members, friends, and members of the Denton community. The evening was a wonderful celebration of music, fellowship, and the many talents within our church family. We are grateful for the joy and creativity that Dr. Josh brings both to our church and the wider community.

Left:

Dr. Josh in his element at Steve's Wine Bar

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

Barbecue Sauce

(page 113)

- 1 ... onion, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 2 Tbsp. vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 c. tomato catsup
- 1 c. brown stock or water
- 1 c. diced celery
- 2 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. Lea & Perrins sauce



Fry onion in butter; add other ingredients in order named. Cover and simmer 1 hour, adding a little water if necessary.

Martha Brown

Households for Prayer

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

August 2026

Judy Royal
Jann Sanders
B.K. Schlesinger
Diana and Ron Shenberger
Steve and Carolyn Smith
Scott Starkweather
Mike Steinel and Beverly Hoch
David and Nancy Storrie

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: Loretta Norton, Glenn Pearrow, Michael Stroud, and Linda Harris

Continuing Prayers for 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 C, Larry C, Sherman C, Mr. Cox, Valorie F, John K, Miyako N, Brad S and the family of Phil Reese

Other Prayer Needs: Cathy T

Sympathy for the families of Mike Cassidy, Donna Mehaffey, Brenda McClendon Thomas, and Chris Loccisano

Long-term Care Residences: Pat and Hal R (Austin)

Birthdays *Anniversaries*

6 B.K. Schlesinger
26 Beverly Hoch
31 Chris Briggs

10 Terry and Marlene Nobles



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
August 2026

- 1 Matt. 28:11–20
- 2 Mark 3:20–30
- 3 John 1:1–18
- 4 John 1:19–28
- 5 John 1:29–42
- 6 John 1:43–51
- 7 John 2:1–12
- 8 John 2:13–25
- 9 Mark 4:35–41
- 10 John 3:1–21
- 11 John 3:22–36
- 12 John 4:1–26
- 13 John 4:27–42
- 14 John 4:43–54
- 15 John 5:1–18
- 16 Mark 5:25–34
- 17 John 5:19–29
- 18 John 5:30–47
- 19 John 6:1–15
- 20 John 6:16–27
- 21 John 6:27–40
- 22 John 6:41–51
- 23 Mark 6:1–6a
- 24 John 6:52–59
- 25 John 6:60–71
- 26 John 7:1–13
- 27 John 7:14–36
- 28 John 7:37–52
- 29 John 8:12–20
- 30 Matt. 5:1–12
- 31 John 8:21–32

Source: PC(USA) Common
Lectionary

Aerobics

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

Office Hours

Office Manager Mon 9-3, Tue-Wed 9-4,
Fri 9-2

Pastor M-Th 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

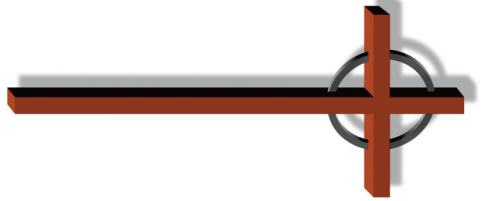
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