

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. 9

September 2026

Editor: Joshua Cossette

From the desk of Pastor Ernest,

Did you remember saying last winter you couldn't wait for summer? Rev. Ellen and I once served as Transitional Pastors in far northwest Iowa, almost into South Dakota. Now that was a winter ... and this has been quite a summer! Thankfully, for many of us extreme temperatures are, at worst, an inconvenience. We have much to be thankful for given even in these 20 plus days of temps over 100 degrees that interior conditions remained comfortable.

I am also thankful for a considerable number of other building updates completed that have benefitted our ministries and ministry partners. Examples include replacement doors to Erwin Hall, and repairs to Erwin Hall roof leaks, New, working locks for the West exit toward Hinkle. Ceilings tiles that were reinforced or replaced, along with the related condensation issues addressed. Each of these have enhanced the aesthetics of the main building along with new lighting fixtures that make entering the office area far more inviting.

The whole session has overseen approval of the work done so far, and I hope you take opportunity to share your appreciation with them, along with your office manager Dr. Josh Cossette. Some items that remain will be completed by a handyman with the hopes they will be completed in time for Advent celebrations.

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Two additional areas of excitement have come from the consistent attendance to the Pastor's Bible Study at 10 am. Between those in person and attending via Zoom we reached as high as 14 and averaged 10 each week. Please note the new study will begin called, "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" – all who participate will be blessed how this material helps provide a sort of a spiritual thermometer to your spiritual health.

The second exciting piece regards the number of young people who are attending worship again this year. I have made/remade connections with professors and students at UNT College of Music, and some of those have helped bring forth greater interest in FPC serving as their church home. We have a number of students interested in joining as full members. I thank the Worship Committee for helping to coordinate with those who are musicians, and others who are not, yet are interested in participating in worship. This is so key because people want to worship at a place where they see others their own age, their own vibe, and energy.

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Session asked me to share with the congregation that we have a core group of **Young Adults** who call this church their home. As we continue to meet, I will ask for volunteers to serve as shepherds for these young people. This would include having their young adult over for a dinner, inviting them one afternoon to bring over their laundry, or maybe a care package here and there. It is in these connections that relationship are made and sustained for the blessing of both the giver and the receiver.

Last Thursday, I spoke with a number of other pastors in our presbytery who shared their own delight seeing increased participation from like-minded young adults connecting with their congregations, creating Bible Studies, and small groups of various kinds, as well as their weekly participation in worship.

But all these updates and repairs don't really matter if we are not inviting others to join you for fellowship events like the September Spaghetti dinner, or the Trunk-or-Treat in October. This building has plenty of room to serve more, do you have room in your spirit to invite others to join in with you?

“The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.” Proverbs 19:23 (ESV)

Let us delight in our reverence for God as we enjoy what God is doing here at First Presbyterian Church of Denton!

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Ernest

Mission News

Your mission committee members are Loretta Norton, Jan Cartwright, Judy Royal, Sally Callahan, Linn Welborn, Pastor Ernest Gardner and Jim Welborn (chair). Mission committee is also responsible for Growth and Outreach. These two committees were merged several years ago.

Mission committee has a number of ongoing initiatives that include, but are not limited to: ALPHA program, contacting and assisting visitors and providing visitors with church information, maintaining the Little Free Food Pantry, providing food bags that members can take and distribute to the hungry, support of Direction 61:3, support of Interfaith Denton (formerly Interfaith Ministries), support and semi annual supply drives for Our Daily Bread, publishing a directory or directory supplement periodically, monthly publication of Celtic Cross newsletter, activities such as Trunk or Treat and Pet Blessing.

In October, we hope to host “A Matter of Balance,” an eight week class on Thursday mornings. The class will be conducted by Kim Mathis and the Texas Agency on Aging. More details to follow at a later time.

Planning and monitoring all these activities provides members of our congregation opportunity to actively participate in ministry.

If you would like to be involved with mission, please contact Jim Welborn and perhaps join the team. We appreciate all the support of the congregation, and we ask you all to continue to pray for the mission committee, it's members and our congregation's commitment to mission. God truly blessed us.

There are many other opportunities for learning at First Presbyterian Church. On Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM, you may choose from the ALPHA course studied in the conference room or the Disciples class, which is currently studying the Gospel of Luke, in the Adult Sunday School room.

The Women's Bible Study has started again and will continue to meet on the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 AM in the conference room from September – May. They are using the PW Horizons study of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians.

Pastor Ernest has begun a new bible study on Wednesdays at 10 AM entitled “Emotionally Healthy Spirituality”.

Discussions are beginning regarding a Men's monthly Bible study. If you are interested please contact Judy Royal.



School is back in session at Denton Christian Preschool, and there is plenty of excitement and energy as a new year begins! With three classes full of eager learners and a fully staffed school, DCP is ready for another year of learning, growing, and discovering together. The dedicated teachers and staff are looking forward to creating a welcoming and engaging environment for each child. It is wonderful to see the halls filled with smiling faces and plenty of activity once again. Best wishes to Denton Christian Preschool for a joyful and successful school year!

A great first week is already in the books at Denton Christian Preschool! It was a wonderful start to what promises to be an exciting year of learning, growing, and making new memories.



September 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Terry Nobles Birthday Women's Circle Bible Study 10 AM	2 Pastor's Bible Study 10 AM	3 Paul Mehaffey Birthday Gerald and Cheryl Anniversary	4	5
6 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Alpha 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM 	7 Labor Day (Office Closed) Ron Shenberger Birthday	8	9 Pastor's Bible Study 10 AM	10 Reverend Ernest and Ellen Officiating wedding	11 Reverend Ernest and Ellen Officiating wedding	12 Reverend Ernest and Ellen Officiating wedding
13 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Alpha 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM <i>Rev. Ginger Hertenstein leading worship</i> Spaghetti Luncheon 12 PM	14 Mike Steinel and Beverly Hoch Anniversary	15 Session 7:00 PM Clay and Kelly Briggs Anniversary	16 Pastor's Bible Study 10 AM	17	18	19
20 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Alpha 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM Mission Committee 12 PM	21	22	23 Pastor's Bible Study 10 AM	24 Luke Briggs Birthday	25	26
27 Disciples Class 9:30 AM Alpha 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM Celtic Cross Deadline	28 Deacons 11:00 AM Jann Sanders Birthday	29	30 Pastor's Bible Study 10 AM Women' Lunch 11:30 AM			

Upcoming Events at FPC

Bible Studies Are Underway

Women's Bible Study has started up again on **the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 AM** in the Conference Room, exploring Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Pastor Ernest has also begun a new study, "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality," meeting on **Wednesdays at 10:00 AM**. All are welcome to join!

Fellowship, Food, and Fun

Several fellowship events are on the calendar for the months ahead! Join us for a **Spaghetti Luncheon on Sunday, September 13**, followed by our annual **Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 24 at 5:00 PM**, with decorated trunks, costumes, treats, and fun for children and families. Looking further ahead, we'll gather for our **Stewardship Luncheon on Sunday, November 8**, as we celebrate the ministries and life of the church and look toward the coming year. We'll round out the year with our **Christmas Eve Dinner on Thursday, December 24**, sharing a meal and fellowship together as we celebrate the Christmas season.

Denton Bach Society Begins Its 2026–2027 Season

The Denton Bach Society has begun its 2026–2027 season, with two upcoming concerts at First Presbyterian Church. On **Sunday, October 4**, the Society will present "**Baroque Roots, American Branches**", a program exploring connections between Baroque traditions and American music. Then, on **Sunday, December 13**, DBS will present **Handel's Messiah**, one of the most beloved and enduring works of the Christmas season. This performance will offer a wonderful musical celebration during the season of Advent. Watch for more details about both concerts as the dates approach!

Guest Preacher in September

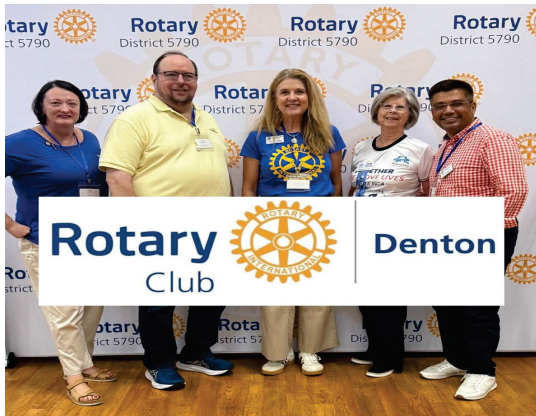
Reverends Ernest and Ellen will be out of town **September 10–14** to officiate a wedding. During their time away, **Rev. Dr. Ginger Hertenstein-Conley** will return to fill the pulpit. Rev. Ginger recently completed her first book, *What to Say When You Pray*, which is now available on Amazon. We look forward to welcoming Rev. Ginger back to FPC!

Voices Needed for Stewardship Sunday

Miss Beverly is organizing a **volunteer choir for Stewardship Sunday on November 8**. If you've ever wanted an opportunity to sing with the choir, this is a great chance to lend your voice for this special Sunday. Please share your interest with Beverly and join in!

CPR Classes Continue

FPC is also continuing to offer CPR classes, providing an opportunity to learn and refresh important, potentially lifesaving skills. The next class will take place on **Thursday, September 10, from 11:30 AM–2:30 PM**. Whether learning CPR for the first time or brushing up on previous training, these classes are a valuable way to become better prepared to respond in an emergency.



Pastor Ernest's involvement in the Rotary Club is another way our church maintains an active presence in the Denton community. Through fellowship, relationship-building, and service, he connects with others who share a desire to make our community a better place.

Left: Pastor Ernest with other members of the Denton Rotary Club

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

Banana Nut Bread

(page 178)

- 1 tsp. vinegar
- ½ c. milk
- 1¾ c. flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 c. ripe banana, mashed
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ c. shortening
- 1½ c. sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ c. chopped nuts



Mix vinegar with milk to sour until ready to use. Mix flour, soda and salt. Cream sugar and shortening, then add eggs, lemon juice, and vanilla, mixing well. Add flour mixture to sugar mixture alternately with milk. Add banana and beat. Add nuts. Grease and flour one large pan or 2 small pans. Pour batter into pan or pans and bake at 350° for 45-55 minutes. Makes 1 large or 2 small loaves.

Jean Hollingsworth

Households for Prayer

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

September 2026

Michael Stroud
Kim Tate
Cathy Taylor
Jim and Linn Welborn
Beverly Westlake
Ted Wilkinson
Helen Beck
Chris, Keely and Parker 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 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: for John C, Glenn Pearrow, 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, Mary, 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

Care Residences: Pat and Hal R (Austin)

Birthdays

Anniversaries

- 1 Terry Nobles
- 3 Paul Mehaffey
- 7 Ron Shenberger
- 24 Luke Briggs
- 28 Jann Sanders



- 3 Gerald and Cheryl Briggs
- 14 Mike Steinel and Beverly Hoch
- 15 Clay and Kelly Briggs

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
September 2026

- 1 John 8:33–47
- 2 John 8:47–59
- 3 John 9:1–17
- 4 John 9:18–41
- 5 John 10:1–18
- 6 Matt. 5:13–20
- 7 John 10:19–30
- 8 John 10:31–42
- 9 John 11:1–16
- 10 John 11:17–29
- 11 John 11:30–44
- 12 John 11:45–54
- 13 Matt. 5:21–26
- 14 John 11:55—12:8
- 15 John 12:9–19
- 16 John 12:20–26
- 17 John 12:27–36a
- 18 John 12:36b–43
- 19 John 12:44–50
- 20 Matt. 6:1–6, 16–18
- 21 Luke (1:1–4) 3:1–14
- 22 Luke 3:15–22
- 23 Luke 4:1–13
- 24 Luke 4:14–30
- 25 Luke 4:31–37
- 26 Luke 4:38–44
- 27 Matt. 13:44–52
- 28 Luke 5:1–11
- 29 Luke 5:12–26
- 30 Luke 5:27–39

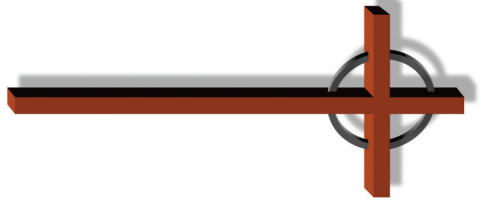
Source: PC(USA) Common
Lectionary

Aerobics

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

Office Hours

Office Manager Mon—Thurs 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Limited office hours on Friday morning
Pastor M-Th 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
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