



**WORSHIP SERVICE**  
**SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 2021, 10:30 A.M.**

Our Scripture readings for next Sunday, the Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost are: Proverbs 9:1-6; and Ephesians 5:15-20 ("Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil"). The title of the sermon is "Wisdom," and the Bulletin is available here: <https://fpcovictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/8-15-2021-bulletin-PDF2.pdf>.



**WELCOME,  
ERICA COLDING!**

We are so fortunate that Erica Colding has responded to our urgent need for a new Office Administrator! Erica was raised in Edna, but she now lives in Victoria with her three children (a son and two daughters): Frank (1st grade); Kinley (5th grade); and Karley (8th grade). Erica is catching on quickly with her new responsibilities, and all who have met her find her to be delightful.

The next time you are at the church on a weekday, please stop by the Church Office and introduce yourself to Erica. She is friendly and so very eager to help us here at First Presbyterian Church.

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## **FPC SESSION CONTINUES TO MONITOR COVID DATA AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROTOCOLS**

The Session is concerned, as we all are, about the recent, dramatic rise in COVID cases as a result of the virulent “Delta variant” of the COVID virus. According to reports in *The Victoria Advocate*, reported cases of COVID infections have, in less than six weeks increased almost *fifty-fold* (from 11 cases reported on June 26 to 534 cases reported on August 8, 2021).

Accordingly, the Session decided at its meeting on Monday evening, August 9, 2021, that while we would not yet suspend in-person worship, we would ask the congregation to be increasingly conscious of the need to maintain social distancing at *all* times before, during, and after the worship service. The Pastor’s “junior high school dance rules” are, alas!, back in force: no hugging; no kissing; no touching!

Even as we continue to spread out in the Sanctuary, we will not (yet) cordon off pew rows. Still, it would be wise once again to skip every other pew for seating. Also, please avoid sitting directly behind, or closer than six feet to, other worshipers around your family group.

Masks will not be mandatory, but as always, anyone who wears a mask will be welcomed and respected. In this regard, the Session does not know a single member of our congregation who is not fully vaccinated against COVID, although of course we will have visitors. In good conscience, the Session cannot image why, other than for a specific medical condition, a person in this great country would not elect to be vaccinated. At the same time, however, we must recognize the reality of our world and, accordingly, remain as cautious as possible.

Also, if you are nervous about singing in church (which, based on the precautions taken by our wise members, we will continue to do until further notice), we encourage you to sit in the back of the church. Again everyone should spread out, with singers in the front half of the Sanctuary and non-singers in the back half.

Finally, if you have any concerns about, or recommendations concerning, our church’s public health protocols, please share them with us. Other than accepting science and the other God-given miracles of modern medicine, the Session does not have any unique wisdom about how to respond to this fourth wave of pandemic infection. Any thoughts, ideas, or inspiration you may have to share with your pastor or any Elder on the Session would be greatly and sincerely appreciated.

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## **MIDYEAR FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT**

From time to time, the Session has asked the Treasurer, Jim Stokes, to update the congregation on the financial statues of First Presbyterian Church. Unfortunately, that doesn't reach those members who miss that particular service. We will continue that practice, but in an effort to assure everyone's knowledge of the church's current financial situation, the Session believed it was prudent to put it in writing and circulate via this Newsletter.

The Finance Committee and the Session have been briefed on the following information based on the June 30, 2021 report from the church's accountants, Bumgardner Morrison:

### **Affirmative data:**

- Our financial reserves (those accounts we keep at the Texas Presbyterian Foundation and elsewhere to meet financial emergencies) remain strong at approximately \$140,000.
- For the first time this year, our income matched our expenses during the month of June 2021. Although we continue to run a deficient for the year (see below), we are hopeful that our June results may be a sign that we are turning the corner on matching our income to outflow.
- Those of our members who formally pledged their financial support to the church are being more than faithful in keeping their promise. "Pledge-giving" to FPC was over 3% above the amount pledged through the first six months of 2021.

### **Challenging data**

- Anticipating the impact of COVID on attendance, the Session budgeted for a deficit this year. Due to some front-end expenses, the deficit for the first six months is a bit more than half of what was planned for the entire year. Obviously, Sunday morning attendance has a huge impact on the weekly plate offerings, although such offerings are improving. Currently, they are down 75% from pre-Covid levels, but they have picked up this summer (surprisingly), as attendance has likewise picked up. June plate offerings, in fact, were 28% more than budgeted per month.
  - We pray that attendance and offerings will continue to improve this fall and that the recent Covid surge will be abated. Indeed, the Session is looking for ways to resume our fellowship activities, and while I am not allowed to divulge any secrets, I would encourage our male bakers to begin practicing their cake-baking skills. You never know when that challenge may soon arise!
  - If need be, the Finance Committee is authorized to withdraw necessary funds from our Texas Presbyterian Foundation accounts to meet our obligations. So far, however, no such withdrawal has been needed. Again, let us pray than none will be needed as summer comes to an end and as we return to worship during the last four months of the year.
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***Give me a "P!" Give me a "D!" Give me an "S!"***





As we have published before, exciting plans are underway for a *Homecoming* celebration on Sunday morning, October 24, 2021, to rejoice during the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Presbyterian Day School by the First Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Texas.

If you are a PDS former student, teacher, or staff member, or have family or friends who are, please provide the First Presbyterian Church office ([info@fpcofvictoria.org](mailto:info@fpcofvictoria.org) or (361) 575-2441) with contact information to receive a special invitation. Tell your friends; help us spread the word! All are welcome.

With the support and far-sighted vision of the members of our church who have preceded us, the Presbyterian Day School held its first classes on September 9, 1946. The school's rich tradition of teaching young children in a loving and nurturing Christian environment has been fundamental throughout its history and continues today.

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**THIS YEAR MARKS THE  
180TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE FOUNDING OF  
OUR CHURCH**

First Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Texas was founded on October 2, 1841. We will mark that happy occasion during our worship service on Sunday morning October 3, 2021.

In preparation for our celebration, we are asking all the members and friends of FPC to make a special effort to search for any memorabilia or artifacts you believe would be of interest to our Congregation. Please check your closets, your bureau drawers, and “those boxes” in the attic, the garage, the basement, or wherever, and help us revisit some memories of the long and storied history of this church’s witness to the Gospel in and around the Victoria community.

*We have already received some positive responses to our call for church memorabilia and artifacts, and we would like to keep the momentum going.* So, please contact our church Historian, Henry Hauschild ([heneryjhaus@aol.com](mailto:heneryjhaus@aol.com)), or the Church Office about anything interesting you discover! Every anniversary is a joyous one for our church, but let’s make this next one a particularly happy occasion as we continue to emerge from the pandemic.

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As Victoria Christian Assistance Ministry celebrates its 35th year of serving Victoria County, it is once again holding its annual Raffle Fundraiser. 100% of the raffle proceeds go to VCAM's mission of providing food, clothing, and services to those less fortunate in

Victoria County. The Grand prize is a \$1,000 HEB gift card, in addition to 30 more prizes valued from \$50-\$750. Tickets are now available for \$5 each or 6 for \$25.

**The drawing is at NOON, Saturday, September 25th as part of VCAM's OPEN HOUSE festivities from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (you need not be present to win).** VCAM is located at 108 N. Liberty - contact 361-572-0048 for more information

**Members of First Presbyterian Church are urged to contact Becky Richter at 361-220-1111 for tickets or look for her in the Narthex after Sunday morning services.**

Our church also continues to support VCAM with our contributions of food and other household supplies. In August, VCAM is requesting particular attention to the following needs of those whom they serve:

Dried beans, canned vegetables, and toiletry items.

Therefore, please search your pantry and closets once again to see if you have any suitable items to provide VCAM's clientele in need. As always, bring them to worship on Sunday morning, or to the church anytime during the week, and place them in the collection baskets you will find in the Narthex and in the hallway by Fellowship Hall.

Peace, grace, and mercy,

Pastor Jim

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