

**JOIN US IN PERSON
FOR OUR WORSHIP SERVICE ON
SUNDAY, MAY 29, 2029, 10:30 AM**

Our Scripture readings this Sunday, the Seventh (and last) Sunday of Easter are: Psalm 97; and John 17:20-26. The title of the sermon is "Unity in Love," and a copy of the Bulletin for this service can be found here: <https://fpcofvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-29-5-Bulletin-PDF.pdf>.

Please join us in person for this special celebration, and why not bring a friend?



**WHAT A WONDERFUL WAY TO CELEBRATE
THE INSTALLATION OF OUR NEW
PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OFFICERS!**

Once again our Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall were filled with joy and fellowship as we honored our Presbyterian Women last Sunday after our worship service. Not only did we install new PW officers, not only did we enjoy the delicious meal prepared and served by the Presbyterian Women of our church, last Sunday we also generously contributed approximately \$250 to the PW Birthday Offering.

As you enjoy the pictures of this happy occasion below, let us ask God to bless the work and ministry of the Presbyterian Women and their officers in the coming year.



**MARIE RAMSEUR
HONORED WITH
PW HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD**

During our luncheon hosted by the Presbyterian Woman last Sunday, Marie Ramseur was presented the PW Life Membership Award in recognition of her tireless and faithful service over the years in support of the ministries and missions of the Presbyterian Women of First Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Texas.

Congratulations, Marie! Well done, good and faithful servant!



**REMEMBER “5TH TUESDAY” GATHERINGS
WITH OUR SISTER CHURCHES?**

It has been ages (at least before the pre-COVID age!) since the congregations in our area have gathered for fellowship and a brown bag dinner. Remember how we used to greet our friends from Rockport, El Campo, Palacios, Gonzales, and other Presbyterian churches all over Southcentral Texas?

Well, good news! May has five Tuesdays in it, and so we are going to gather again in joy and fellowship with our sisters and brothers from Presbyterian churches around the area. Naturally, since we are located at the “crossroads,” First Presbyterian Church is going to host our first get-together in a long time.

Please plan to join us in Fellowship Hall at **6:00 p.m., on Tuesday, May 31, 2022**, to warmly greet our friends from neighboring congregations whom we have not seen for so long. Bring your own supper if you wish to dine (FPC will provide the coffee and tea)-- the meeting will be extremely informal and fun!

To the extent that we plan to have a “program,” we thought we would share with one another how our various congregations adapted to COVID. We are particularly interested whether any of our churches discovered something “new” about the method or content of their worship practices that they have retained even after the pandemic.

To be clear, all the members of our congregation are invited for a brief evening of conversation

and fellowship. This is not just an event for pastors or Session members-- this is a joyful reunion of folks who are glad to be Presbyterians!



**ANOTHER SCHOOL YEAR
“IN THE BOOKS”
FOR OUR
PRESBYTERIAN DAY SCHOOL**

Tears and hugs were in abundance on Friday, May 20th, as our Presbyterian Day School celebrated the conclusion of another school year and the graduation of its kindergarten class to the first grade next year. We are grateful for the teachers, parents, and guardians who devote such love, care, and effort to the education and Christian nurture of our young disciples.

May everyone have a wonderful and restful summer as we await the return of both new and familiar faces to our classrooms in August!





SAVE THE DATE!
THE VICTORIA BACH FESTIVAL
IS RETURNING TO FPC ON
THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2022, 12:00–1:00 PM

Constrained by COVID in 2021, this year the Victoria Bach Festival is returning in all its artistic splendor! For complete information about the VBF concert schedule this year during the first full week of June, go to: <https://victoriabachfestival.org/concerts/events/>.

FPC members can take special pride that our church will once again be a VBF host venue for a concert during the noon hour on Thursday, June 9, 2022. “Duo-B,” a string duet of Hirono Borter (violin) and Philip Borter (cello), will perform “Postcards from South America.” More details are available here: <https://victoriabachfestival.org/events/duo-b/>.

Don’t forget to mark your calendar for another spectacular community concert in our glorious, acoustically vibrant Sanctuary!

WALKING CLUB / BOOK CLUB

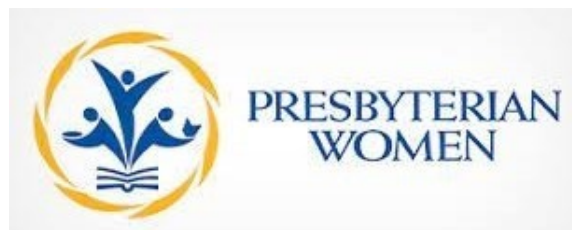
Don’t forget that the church is open for a nice and cool walk. One large circle around the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary will add 300 steps to your daily total. Walk alone or with a friend and let’s step our way into better health.

Please join us on Tuesday, June 28th, at 1:00 pm in the church parlor for our discussion on the book “Where the Crawdads Sing”. We will be making decisions concerning dates and times for our future gatherings. If you have any recommendations on books to read, please bring those titles with you.

Our book for late June is “Where the Crawdad Sings” by Delia Owens. In July we will read

“The Lost Garden” by Helen Humphrey. And we will finish off our summer with “Recipes for Love and Murder” by Sally Andrew.

Any questions, contact Roxanna Hauschild or Dawn Neel.



PERPETUAL HELP HOME IS THE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN MISSION PROJECT FOR MAY 2022

Current needs for this worthy organization are:

- Toilet paper
- Laundry detergent (Detergent can be liquid, powder, or pods)
- Paper towels
- Coffee
- Facial Tissues ("Kleenex")
- Tall Kitchen Garbage bags
- Quart size food storage bags
- Body Wash
- Condiments (ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard)
- HEB & Walmart gift cards

Of the items requested above, toilet paper, laundry detergent, paper towels, & coffee are the most urgent needs.



OUR FORWARD JOURNEY

As part of the Session's *Our Forward Journey* initiative, we have been conducting an exhaustive review of our 2022 Operating Budget. Led by Ruling Elder Dawn Neel, and supported by Erica Colding and your pastor, the Session has already begun to identify areas of cost reduction, and we will report on our efforts in greater detail during a congregational meeting which the Session will call (likely in July) after we have finalized our work.

This budget review is an excellent example of the Session exercising its stewardship responsibilities on behalf of the congregation. To be clear, the Finance Committee continually monitors our Operating Budget and reports to the Session on no less than a quarterly basis. The extended review which we are conducting now, however, is a "deeper dive" into the church's budget that allows the Session to focus line-by-line on the church's expenditures as well as its sources of revenue.

This review also allows us to remind the congregation that while the Body of Christ does not need a building to be the Church, if the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church want to maintain a house of worship in Victoria, they need to determine the priority they are prepared to give to their financial support of our church, its operations, and its ministries.

If you have not recently given prayerful consideration to what this church means to your faith, then as we approach the middle of 2022, now might be an appropriate time to consider once again how much you are able to tithe in support of the church we love. Pledge cards are still available in the church office if you have not made your pledge for 2022. Moreover, if you believe that God is calling you to increase your level of giving for the remainder of the year, you need only to fill out a revised pledge card or otherwise inform Jim Stokes (Treasurer) or Dawn Neel (Assistant Treasure) of your intentions.

May God bless you and our church as, in the course of *Our Forward Journey* initiative, we plan how best to continue to the work of the Lord in the years to come.



WHEN WILL WE EVER, EVER LEARN?

It seems as if the ink was hardly dry on my last Newsletter article bemoaning gun violence last weekend at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York and at the [Irvine Taiwanese Presbyterian Church](#) in California, when our television screens, newspapers, and social media were once again crowded with familiar images of first-responders engaged in the grim work of removing bodies from some public location-- this time a school; yes, another school.

Few things make me despair more than the senseless, preventable death of children. Few things enrage me more than politicians, lobbyists, and gun manufacturers who obstruct constructive discussions among well meaning people of *all* political persuasions to curb gun violence while respecting a citizen's Second Amendment rights. I cannot help but think that if Americans had the Constitutional right to collect and retain rattlesnakes in their homes, they would recognize the harm that such reptiles could do in untrained hands and would agree to responsible measures to protect their neighbors *and their children* from the harm that would result without such measures. Yes, rattlesnakes might still kill people, but surely in fewer numbers.

Make not mistake about it. Just as guilt and shame are the special province of cigarette manufacturers who hid the results of their cancer research from an unsuspecting public and of church administrators who obstructed the disclosure of sexual predators in the midst of their leaders, there is blood on hands of gun manufacturers who pander to a lunatic crowd to protect and enhance their profits.

It saddens me, also, that if the past is any indicator of the future, the blood of countless innocents will continue to be shed while money and greed have their way in our society. Nevertheless, just as I pray that the parents of the dead babies in Uvalde holding each other in their arms will somehow find the light of Jesus Christ in the midst of their terrible, unimaginable darkness, I also pray that God will lead our nation out of this dark epidemic of gun violence.

On the one hand, I despair as Isaiah did when he lamented, "Therefore justice is far from us, and deliverance does not reach us; we wait for light, but there is only darkness; and for brightness, but we walk in gloom" (Isaiah 59:9). On the other hand, ours is a powerful, sovereign God, and if we

repent, he will deliver us from the darkness. So, I also take comfort in the words of the Psalmist, “By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas” (Psalm 65:5).

Therefore, once again, we turn to prayer. Immediately following the slaughter of the innocents in Uvalde, Texas the following prayer was written by the Rev. Laurie Kraus, the Associate Mission Director of Compassion, Peace, and Justice of the Presbyterian Church (USA);

*God our shelter, hold us under the shadow of your wings
as we bow before you in grief and pain.*

*We pray for each family who has lost a beloved child, a parent, a friend;
we pray for those who have witnessed horror, and are wounded in body or spirit,
for each of them is a child made in your image.*

*We pray for ourselves, that we will find strength to support the brokenhearted,
grace to find our way in the darkness of grief, anger, and loss;
light to sense your presence, even in the valley of the shadow of death.
Restore our hopes, our hearts, even as we weep with grief and tremble with anger.
Fill us, your wounded, willing people, with a peace that passes understanding,
the courage to nurture healing and hope,
and the willingness to bear the Christ light, even in these days of shadow.
In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.*

Peace, grace, and mercy,

Pastor Jim

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