

**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OFFICER INSTALLATION SUNDAY
MAY 22, 2022, 10:30 AM**

During our next worship service on Sunday morning, May 22, 2022, the Sixth Sunday in Easter, we will honor the Presbyterian Women of First Presbyterian Church as they install their officers for the coming year. As if these dear souls do not already do enough for our congregation and our community, they are inviting us to join them for lunch in Fellowship Hall immediately following worship. This is *not* a potluck affair-- the Presbyterian

Women will be preparing and serving a meal for us to enjoy!

The collective recipes of the Presbyterian Women are a legend even among other denominations! Thanks to the love, devotion, and culinary talent of our own Presbyterian Women, we will be enjoying a home-cooked meal like no other. You do not want to miss this (and bring a friend to impress them as well)!

Our Scripture readings this Sunday are: Psalm 67; and Mark 6:30-32. The title of the sermon is “No Leisure Even to Eat,” and a copy of the Bulletin for this service can be found here: <https://fpcofvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/5-22-2022-Bulletin-PDF.pdf>.



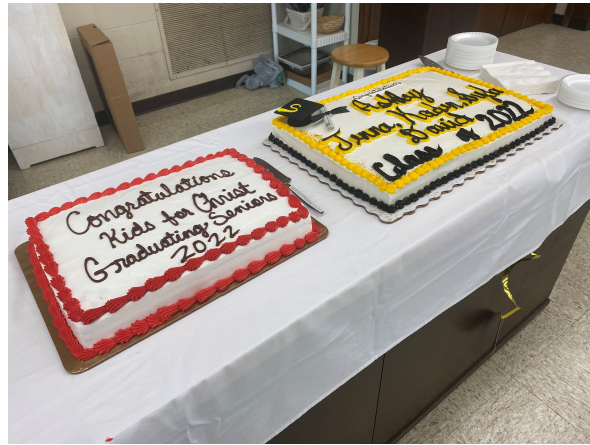
GRADUATING SENIORS SUNDAY WAS A WONDERFUL CELEBRATION

This past Sunday, together with our Kids for Christ graduates and their families and friends, FPC members and visitors had a delightful time admiring and congratulating the five high school graduating seniors who are now on their way into the world. Lots of smiles, and a few tears (as to be expected), were shared among all who attended our worship service and the potluck luncheon

that followed.

Once again, FPC members were open, generous, and loving with Christian hospitality as we served generous portions of delicious food and still had enough leftovers for folks to take home and enjoy an encore of good home-cooking. Thanks, also, to the Presbyterian Women who surprised the graduating seniors with personalized blankets covered with pictures of their happy memories during their years in Kids for Christ. As you enjoy the pictures below, let us again ask God to bless these fine young women and men and guard and protect them as they enter the next chapter of their lives.





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!



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

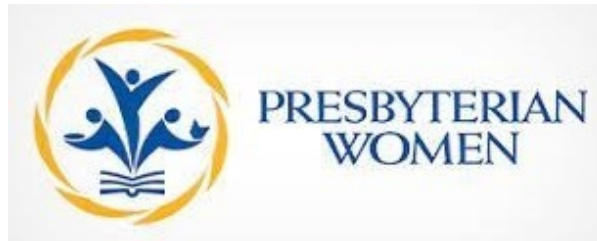
Don't forget that the church is open for a nice and cool walk. One large circle around the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary will add 300 steps to your daily total. Walk alone or with a friend and let's step our way into better health.

We had a wonderful discussion on our first book, “No! I Don't Want to Join a Book Club.” We are still working on finding the perfect day and time to meet once a month to discuss our monthly book reviews. So, keep an ear open for that information in next week's newsletter.

Our book for late June is “Where the Crawdads Sings” by Delia Owens. In July we will read “The Lost Garden” by Helen Humphreys. 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.



WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR FACEBOOK PAGE?

For those who are accustomed to watching our worship services and reading about church events our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fpcovictoria), you will have noticed that for the past two weeks we have not been able to livestream our services on that social media site.

Boxcast, the company whose software we use to broadcast our services on both our Facebook page and our website, informs us that they are having “technical issues” with Facebook. There is nothing wrong with your computer, and there is nothing wrong with the church’s Internet system; the problem lies between those points due to Boxcast’s inability to connect with Facebook.

Obviously, Boxcast advises us that they are working diligently to resolve this issue, but meanwhile we are unable to livestream to our Facebook page until the problem is solved. We will keep the congregation informed about this issue.

Happily, however, our livestream feed is *still* working well on our website (www.fpcovictoria.org). So, if you are unable to join us in person on a Sunday morning, please join us on our website.



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 LEARN?

As if the heart of every Christian is not already heavily burdened with the violence and atrocities of the war in Ukraine, this week we were assaulted (I use the word intentionally) once again by violence and senseless death in our own nation.

Over the weekend we were confronted with the pain and sorrow of two more mass shootings in our country: at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York on Saturday and at the [Irvine Taiwanese Presbyterian Church](#) in California on Sunday. As a citizen, I despair over those who are so neurotic about their Second Amendment rights (rights which have been affirmed by no less than the U.S. Supreme Court) that they cannot engage in a constructive discussion about gun violence, even as countless innocent men, women, and children (black, brown, white, Jew, Baptist, Presbyterian, and so many others) bleed to death on the vinyl floors of our schools, churches, and shopping centers.

How much violence will it take before we have a constructive conversation by well-meaning people of all political persuasions about how best to reduce the madness of gun violence? When will we ever learn that God did not mean for his children to die needlessly, unexpectedly, and tragically in a hail of bullets in churches, synagogues, and grocery stores?

As I despair amidst the anguish of these events, however, I find some help in the prayer below written by Teri Ott, the editor of the [Presbyterian Outlook](#). Prayer can be one form of God's therapy, and so if you, too, are disturbed by the seemingly unending stories of death and mayhem in our country, I now share that prayer with you, hoping that it will offer hope and comfort of the type that Christians seek in times of great distress.

God of grace, we lament the violence.

For those who have no words...

those holding themselves, rocking with each wave of grief...

those planting both feet, seeking balance in crisis and chaos...

those who moan, weep, and wail the names of their dead...

those sitting silently in front of their screens sickened by the shootings,

by the innocent lives lost, by the hatred that fuels such violence...

We pray, O God.

We pray for the victims in Buffalo, New York, and Laguna Woods, California.

*We pray for those terrorized and traumatized by horrific shootings.
We lament for the lessons the shootings teach us over and over about racism
and hate, undeniable and unrelenting, so costly.
We pray for the people of color who pay the price for that hatred, day after day,
year after year, century after century.
We pray for our Taiwanese sisters and brothers in California targeted during the
violence at Geneva Presbyterian Church.
We pray that your people find comfort in your saving grace.
Our land is troubled, and our peace disturbed.*

*God of love and life, guide us by your truth.
Bend the arc of the universe towards justice.
Inspire us with courage to resist the evil of racism,
to proclaim your inclusive love,
to root out the enemies of righteousness,
to persist for peace.
Let nothing move us from your path of love, Blessed God.
Let nothing sway our confidence that you are with us.
Turn our eyes to Christ and the promise of our redemption. Amen.*

Peace, grace, and mercy,

Pastor Jim

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