

DISTRIBUTION NOTE:

AS WITH MANY OTHER BUSINESSES AND HOMES IN VICTORIA, OUR CHURCH'S INTERNET SERVICE (MAINTAINED BY OPTIMUM) WAS "OUT" YESTERDAY AFTERNOON (WEDNESDAY) UNTIL PAST 5:00 P.M. AS A RESULT, THE ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION OF OUR NEWLETTER HAS BEEN DELAYED UNTIL THIS MORNING.



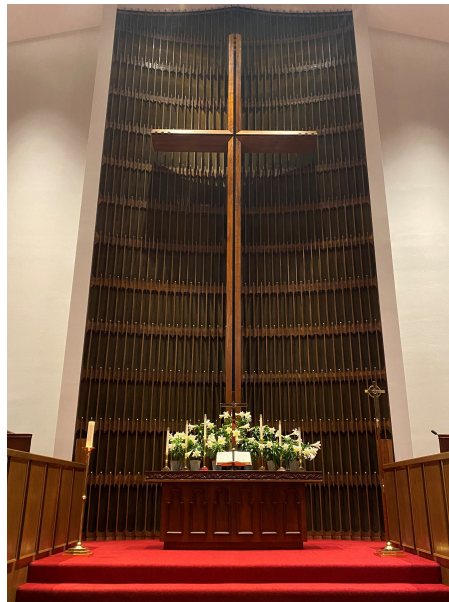
**JOIN US FOR
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE,
APRIL 16, 2023, 10:30 A.M.**

Please help us keep the glory of Easter alive throughout Eastertide, the liturgical period that begins on Easter morning and continues through the six Sundays following Easter and that culminates with Pentecost (which, this year, is Sunday, May 28, 2023).

Our Scripture readings for this Sunday, the Second Sunday of Easter, are Acts 2:14a, 22-32 (Peter preaches the Resurrection to the crowd in Jerusalem) and 1 Peter 1:3-9 (Peter speaks of our heavenly inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading). The title of the sermon is "The Joy of Our Inheritance," and a copy of the Bulletin for this service can be found here: <https://fpcovictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-4-16-Bulletin-PDF.pdf>.



We are also so pleased to announce that David Faskas, accomplished guitarist and good friend of FPC, will join us this Sunday as he plays sacred music on his guitar. Those of us who have heard David play before know how beautiful his music sounds in our acoustically majestic Sanctuary. What a wonderful way to celebrate the Sunday after Easter with beautiful music and a good friend! Come join us, please. You will be enriched!



“... FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.”

This is what Paul wrote in his second letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor 9:7), and he could have just as easily been writing to the saints at FPC, Victoria.

With open and loving hearts, the members, families, and friends of FPC always give generously of their treasure. We received over \$700 for our Easter lilies to honor and memorialize loved ones, *and in addition*, we received over \$425 to support Presbytery Mission's Great Hour of Sharing.

The lilies on our altar on Easter morning (pictured above) speak not only to the glory of God and the joy of the Good News of the Resurrection, but they are also a tangible symbol of the loving, caring, generous hearts of our FPC family, all of whom love the Lord and faithfully support the missions of our church.

EASTER CELEBRATIONS AT PRESBYTERIAN DAY SCHOOL!

Although rabbits and eggs (much less chocolate!) do not figure prominently in the Bible, they have somehow become joyful symbols of the Easter Season. Children (of all ages!) enjoy Easter egg hunts, chocolate bunnies, and all that goes with them.

For children and adults alike to enjoy such happiness does not, in your pastor's view, detract from the sacredness of Easter. Easter brings joy and hope to all God's people. Celebrating with the customs of one's culture is a happy expression of that joy and hope.

In the pictures below, please enjoy the happiness of our Presbyterian Day School young disciples as they hunted for joyful prizes throughout their school rooms and the church grounds on the Thursday before Good Friday:



OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR AGES 5-12



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these". Matt 19:14

Have a little one who would enjoy learning about God using all their 5 senses? We have just the class for them! Our Sunday school lessons are multi-sensory, which means we are using all 5 senses to learn our Bible stories, and it is fun, fun, fun. Children ages 5-12 are welcome.

The next stop for our Sunday School class is in the Garden of Eden, where we will meet Adam and Eve. We will spend a few weeks learning all about the Tree of Knowledge, Adam and Eve, that pesky snake and how God's love and forgiveness always wins!

Join us on Sunday mornings from 9:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Contact Leila Galvan at 956-367-2234 if you have questions or would like to participate. All are welcome! Meanwhile, enjoy these scenes from previous classes:





Mission and Outreach

You are invited to join the First Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Texas's team for Earth Day on April 22, 2023. We will join teams from around the Victoria area cleaning up roadsides around Victoria. The event is sponsored by Keep Victoria Beautiful in partnership with TxDOT Adopt-a-Highway Program.

Time will be from 7:30 AM to 9:30 AM.

Main Meeting Location: Target Parking Lot at Loop 463.

Breakfast is sponsored by Chick-fil-A and The Chopping Block, and drinks are courtesy of Del Papa Distributing.

Come join our team on April 22, 2023, at 7:30 AM, for some fun, fellowship, exercise, and help keep God's great world a cleaner place.



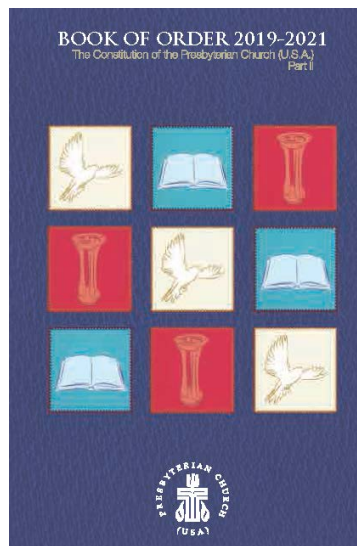
BOY SCOUTS AND CUB SCOUTS

Did you know FPC is the proud supporter of Boy Scout Troop 368 and now Cub Scout Pack 104? The Boy Scouts meet in our Boy Scout hut at the rear of our campus and the Cub Scouts meet in our Fellowship Hall. We will be planning to lend a helping hand as the cubs plan a trip to spend the night on the aircraft carrier Lexington in Corpus Christ, Texas. Stay tuned!



The most precious commodity we own in God's world is our time. When we let one minute slip away without producing something good or doing something for someone else we can never get that minute back. Please consider the value of your minutes and join one of the FPC's team at Christ's Kitchen or Victoria Christian Assistance Ministries.

Luke 11:9 – *“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”*



As your pastor has mentioned in this Newsletter before, I sense a quickening (dare we pray, a revival?!) in our midst as we have worshipped and celebrated through the first calendar quarter of 2023. The Lord is good, and his steadfast mercy lasts forever!

More importantly than increased giving and increased attendance, the level of participation by our members in the work of our church has increased dramatically. Our Mission Study Task Force, led by Donald Anderson, is working tirelessly to discern the will of the Holy Spirit as we continue *Our Journey Forward*.

Other Session Committees (which are comprised of Session members and members of the congregation alike) have also approached their tasks with renewed vigor. Session and congregation members have stepped forward to renew our adult Sunday School class and to start a Sunday School class for youth. Have you noticed? If so, why not share a word of encouragement with those who serve the church and God's kingdom? Better yet, if you have not already, why not join them now?!

If you are already involved in this work, may God bless you! If you feel called to help us, please let your pastor or someone on the Session know-- our names and the committees we chair are listed on the back of the worship bulletin every Sunday. Even if you are unable, due to health or other circumstances, to actively participate in committee work, you can always pray for the wisdom of our Session, the success of our committees, and the growth of our church in service to the Lord.

Finally, a request for prayers for the Session is always in order. We are

aware of the many needs of our church, and we are struggling to meet them with wisdom, faith, and courage. We try to mention the highlights of the Session's work from time to time in this Newsletter, but I would remind the congregation that Session minutes are available for review at any time by any member of our church.

At our Session meeting on Monday evening, April 10th, we were faced with a particularly difficult issue which is representative of some of the hard choices and bold decisions that we are required to make as we maintain, lead, and seek to expand our church with the limited resources available to us. As a matter of faithful stewardship, we carry Casualty and General Liability Insurance to protect our property and personnel (the Presbyterian Day School included). Faithful Session members before us have always maintained this coverage, and it was thanks to their foresight and the hard work of the Hurricane Harvey Task Force that we were able to restore our church with proceeds from the insurance coverage we had at that time.

Since Hurricane Harvey, however, the cost of the church's insurance has soared (our premiums have more than doubled in 5 years). Our insurance premiums for calendar year 2023 will be approximately \$38,500. Moreover, the deductible we must bear for any wind- or hail-storm damage to our property has skyrocketed as well. Through good fortune at the time, our deductible for this type of damage as a result of Hurricane Harvey was \$2,000. That same deductible in 2023 is \$450,000! Last year, we were able to afford a "supplemental" insurance policy to reduce that deductible to \$75,000, but the premiums for that policy cost the church approximately \$15,500. This policy will now expire on April 21, 2023. If we were to renew that same policy, it would now cost approximately \$16,500.

At its last meeting, your Session carefully considered whether to renew this supplemental policy. The Finance Committee had previously discussed the matter in connection with the preparation of our 2023 operating budget and, after prayerful consideration, determined that we did not have the financial resources to renew the policy, as desirable as it would be to do so. Through the first calendar quarter of 2023, our cash flow has been (although barely) sufficient to meet our expenses, but still, until we re-examine the budget at midyear, we are anticipating a \$22,000 deficit in 2023. To have included this insurance premium in the budget would have increased our budget deficit to \$39,000.

While it is true that we are praying that our pledges and offerings will rise through the year sufficiently to cover our current expenses (and eliminate our deficit), it seems premature and thus unwise to anticipate an additional \$39,000 in income just yet. Moreover, while it is also true that we have approximately \$75,000 remaining in the church's "rainy day funds" kept at the Texas Presbyterian Foundation, the Budget Committee believed it would not be prudent to commit over 20% of that fund to pay for this increased insurance. Other contingencies may well arise, and we were fearful, having already reduced these funds by some \$50,000 in 2022, to reduce them even further.

Still, given the seriousness of this decision, the Session reviewed it once more before our renewal deadline occurs. The consequences of our decision are obvious. If we experience one or more serious weather events in the coming 12 months, we will be faced with a \$450,000 wind- and hail-storm deductible for each occurrence. If we purchase the additional insurance, and need it, it will be the wisest investment the Session will have ever made. If we don't purchase the additional insurance, and need it, it could mean the financial ruin of our church.

The Session's decision was not unanimous, but a substantial majority concluded that at this time in the history of our church, we simply could not afford to purchase this supplemental insurance. We believe that we have a higher priority for the limited financial resources available to us at this time and that, while we all devoutly wish we could purchase this insurance, we do not believe it to be the wisest use of the congregation's money.

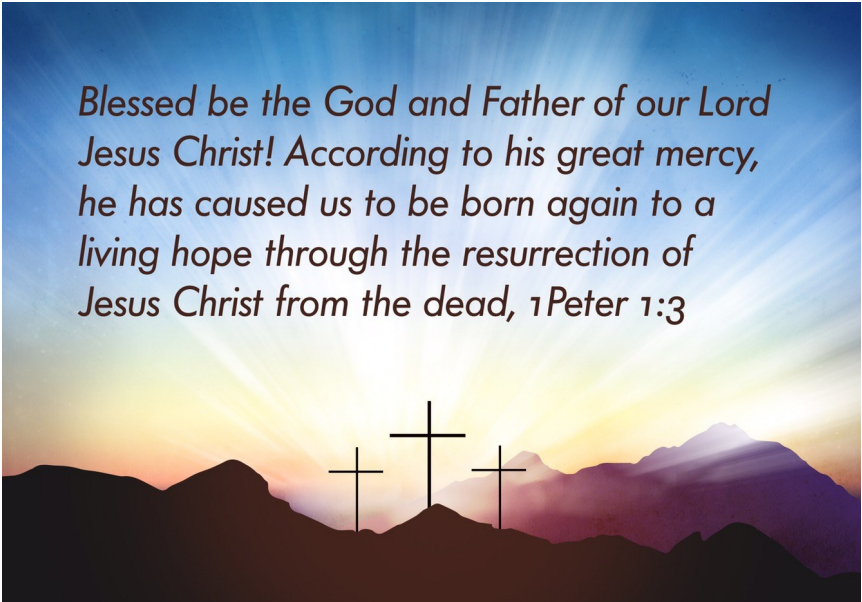
While we pray fervently that God will spare us harm, in the event of catastrophe we are prepared to search for ways forward at that time. Perhaps this will be how God chooses either to redirect or bring to a close (but hopefully not) the long and faithful service of First Presbyterian Church in the Victoria community. Whatever happens, may we always be grateful to God for all that we and our predecessors have been able to accomplish in God's name, and may we find the will and the way to continue our efforts, come what may!

In faith, we also pray, if our building is damaged, that perhaps not all will be lost after all. If needed, perhaps funds to cover our insurance deductible can be obtained (by grant or by loan) from outside sources. Perhaps some of our more affluent members would be willing to help. Your pastor hopes that we are never faced with this dilemma, but it would be foolish to pretend that it might not ever happen.

This was a hard decision made by courageous members of your Session who love this church with all their hearts and who grieve to leave it at the mercy of the elements. Still, this church belongs to all of us, and so we ask that if any members of the church question the wisdom or sincerity of our decision, please speak up now while we have time to reconsider. Speak up now, and please do not second-guess us if calamity befalls our property. We made a decision that we believed was in the best interests of the church when we made it, but we are still willing to reconsider.

Finally, perhaps there is a member (or more than one) who has the means and the will to help us meet this expense this year. If 4 members quickly stepped forward with supplemental pledges of \$4,000 each, we could cover this expense in 2023-2024 as we work to strengthen our income in 2024. Indeed, our prayer is that next year, as a result of our efforts this year, we can resume this coverage to protect our property.

If you would like to contribute (or even loan?) all or some significant amount of money to the church for the purpose of obtaining this coverage while we work towards that end, please speak to your pastor, Dawn Neel (Treasurer), or Jim Stokes (Ass't Treasurer) *as soon as possible*. Might you be an agent of blessing and protection for our church at this time of great need and possible danger? Take that question to the Lord in prayer!



*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy,
he has caused us to be born again to a
living hope through the resurrection of
Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Peter 1:3*

**A CHANGE OF FORMAT
IS COMING FOR OUR**

WORSHIP BULLETIN

The Worship Committee has received comments from some in the congregation that the worship bulletin is too cluttered with unnecessary text. They make the valid point that we only started including copies of the Scripture and lyrics to the hymns as a result of COVID when our safety protocols involved removing pew Bibles and hymnals from the Sanctuary. Those books have been returned, however, so why do we still need to print a large worship bulletin?

The Worship Committee always welcomes this kind of input. So, next Sunday you will notice that our worship bulletin will consist of only 4 pages, instead of 8 or 12 (4, 8, and 12 pages are the only printing options we have; we cannot, for example, print a 5-page bulletin).

So, look for a less cluttered, more compact worship bulletin when you arrive at church next Sunday, and let us know what you think! Meanwhile, for those who receive the bulletin by mail, we will continue to send you the worship bulletin in the format with which you are familiar-- the format that contains Scripture and hymn lyrics. We appreciate that while everyone will have a Bible at home, they may not have a copy of the hymnal. Moreover, for those with limited mobility, they may appreciate the convenience of an "all-in-one" bulletin without having also to manipulate a Bible and/or hymnal.

We will see how this goes for a while, as we await more feedback. Also, to be clear, this is not an economy measure; it is a convenience matter. It costs us less than \$0.30 to print a worship bulletin on our office copier.

April 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

BUSY, BUSY APRIL!



FRIDAY, APRIL 14TH

ONE GREAT HOUR OF CARING: THIS FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2023, AT 10:00 A.M.

Our schedule for future cleaning sessions appears below (all dates are on a Friday). If you have some time to help us save money for the church while enjoying fellowship with good friends who love our church, please join us. No prior experience required!

April 28 at 10:00 AM: Kitchen & Fellowship Hall
 May 12 at 10:00 AM: Sanctuary & Restrooms
 May 26 at 10:00 AM: Office Space & Halls
 June 9 at 10:00 AM: Kitchen & Fellowship Hall

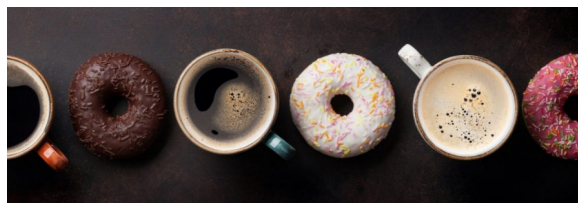
June 23 at 10:00 AM: Sanctuary & Restrooms
July 14 at 10:00 AM: Office Spaces & Halls
July 28 at 10:00 AM: Kitchen & Fellowship Hall

SUNDAY, APRIL 23RD



PDS Sunday returns! Come celebrate with our young disciples as the end of the school year will soon be upon us. Proud parents will be in attendance to listen to the children sing on the steps of our Chancel.

Prior to the worship service, we will be serving light snacks in Fellowship Hall for the students, their families, the PDS faculty, and our own members.



Please plan to arrive a little early (10:00 a.m. would be nice) to enjoy snacks and fellowship with our guests and with one another. Then, please join us in worship as we honor the faculty and staff of our Presbyterian Day School, and as we see, firsthand, the fruits of our education ministry in the young faces

of happy PDS students.



SUNDAY, APRIL 30TH

Mark your calendar for the Presbyterian Men's Bake Sale which will be held Sunday, April 30, immediately following worship and our potluck luncheon scheduled for that day. All men are encouraged to create the pie, cake, cookies, or bread of your choice to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Get out your cookbooks to start making your plans and gathering your ingredients. If you need a little assistance from "others" in your household, that's all right, too!

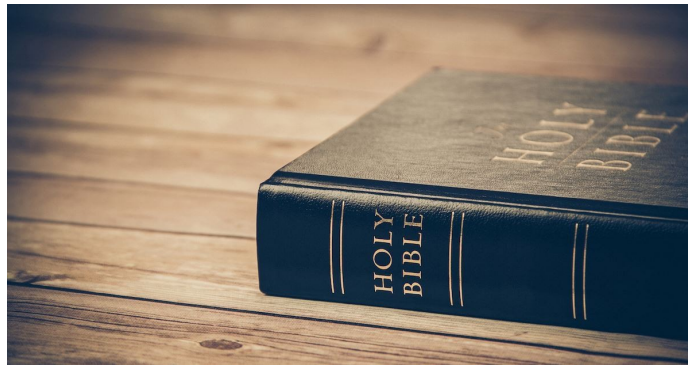


As an extra delight on Sunday, April 30th, the Rev. Bette Burris will join us for two important liturgical functions. First, she will be our guest Liturgist, but more importantly, she will also preside over the baptism in our Chancel of Karoline Gohlke, daughter of Shaye and Katie Gohlke.

Bette officiated at Shaye's and Katie's wedding, and now, as time marches relentlessly on, the couple has asked her to baptize their daughter. Bette might be bashful to say this, but I will say on her behalf that one of the greatest privileges, one of the greatest joys in our "line of work," is to baptize a baby. When that baby is the child of parents whom we have known and loved

(and married!), then greater is the joy!

Come, let us welcome Bette and the Gohlke Family on this joyous occasion!



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- Sunday, April 16, 2023, 9:30 – 10:15 a.m., in the Parlor: On this first Sunday after Easter, the Nellie Hudson Adult Sunday School Class will commence a new study entitled, “*Prayers and Poetry*.” If it has been a while since you have been to Sunday School, this would be a great time to visit with your friends in the Nellie Hudson class as they begin a new, and surely spiritual, study of the beauty, majesty, and power of prayer. Materials will be provided, and you can be sure of a great time of fellowship and learning.
- Kid’s Kingdom: Sunday Morning starting at 9:45 a.m. Come by and experience our multi-sensory lessons.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN MISSION PROJECT APRIL 2023 - THE VINE SCHOOL

Items needed by The Vine School are:

* Disinfectant Wipes

* Dry Erase cleaner (such as Mr. Clean Magic Eraser sponges).
Dry Erase cleaning sprays and wipes are available at Walmart, Big Lots, Office Depot, and Lowe's.

*Nitrile disposable gloves, sizes medium and large

*Baby Wipes (unscented)

*Body Wash - Fragrance Free, Sensitive Skin

*Bubbles

*Large bags of rice and pinto beans for tactile art activities

The Vine School provides a customized learning environment for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. April is Autism Awareness Month, so this is a perfect time for Presbyterian Women to assist the Vine School.

NEWS FOR THE NEW PW STUDY YEAR

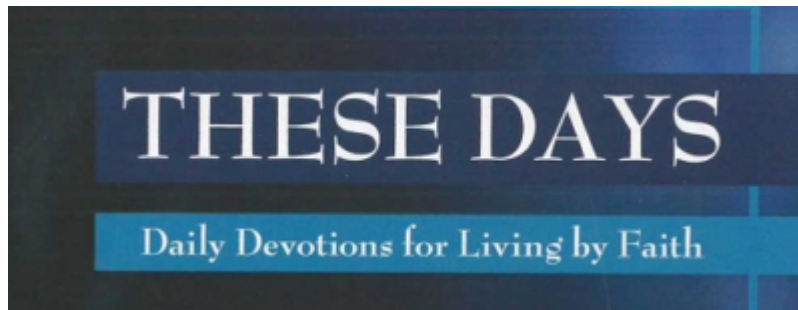
May will bring with it the final lesson in our Horizon's Bible Study: Celebrating Sabbath. Presbyterian Women have begun planning already for the new study year which starts in September. Two big changes include combining the two daytime circles into one and the addition of an evening circle.

We would love to have input about what you would like the evening circle to be. If you are possibly interested in joining the evening circle, we would love to hear from you. Please call the church office and leave your name with Erica. With a list of possible members, we can proceed to make this circle very special and meaningful to those who choose to attend it.



Janice Mullins, originally from Victoria and a member of our church throughout her youth, passed into the Church Triumphant on Friday, April 7, 2023, at the age of 77. We will hold a Service of Witness to the Resurrection in Celebration of the Life of Janice Mullins in our Sanctuary on Saturday, April 22, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. The family invites all in attendance to join them for a catered reception in Fellowship Hall immediately following the service.

In life and in death, we belong to the Lord!



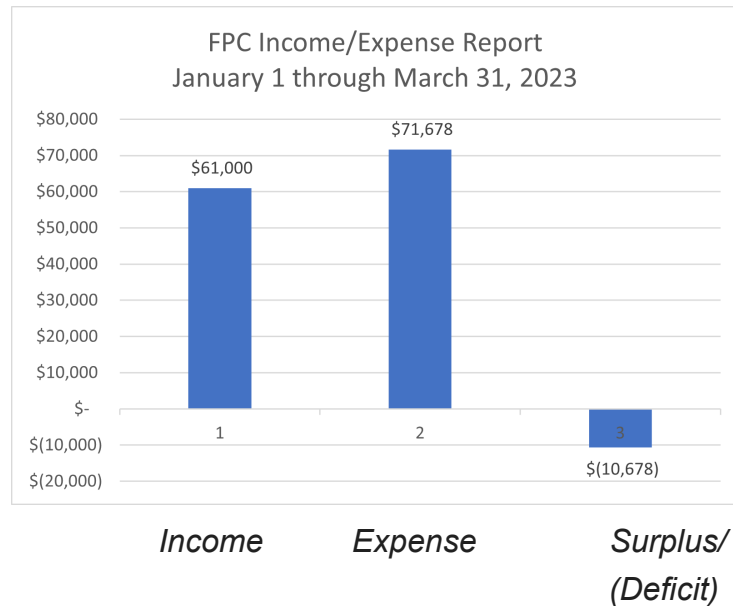
CURRENT COPIES OF “THESE DAYS” HAVE ARRIVED

The church has received the April/May/June 2023 edition of *These Days: Daily Devotions for Living by Faith*. Upon request, we would be happy to mail a copy to any member desiring one. Also, we have placed copies of *These Days* on the tables in the Narthex and in front of the Church Office for people to pick up on Sunday mornings or whenever they are at the church. The devotionals in this cherished publication are always a wonderful source of inspiration, hope, and comfort.



Disappointingly, church revenue through the first calendar quarter of 2023 fell approximately \$10,000 short of our expenses during the same period. Our Finance Committee will be meeting soon to determine if this is merely a timing issue or whether we need to consider even greater (likely painful) reductions in our expenses going forward.

Meanwhile, however, so far we are fortunate to have sufficient cash flow in April (which includes Easter Sunday) to not be in immediate difficulty. Still, if you have been 'tardy' in keeping your pledge-giving current, please help us by catching up as soon as you can!



*Each of you must give as you have made up your mind,
not reluctantly or under compulsion,
for God loves a cheerful giver.*

2 Cor 9:7

Peace, grace, and mercy,

Pastor Jim

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