

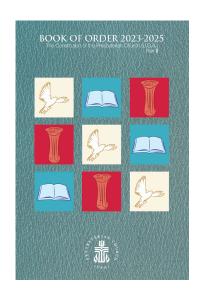


PLEASE JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023, AT 10:30 A.M.

Please join us for worship this Sunday, the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 24, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. Our Scripture readings will be Psalm 145:1-8 ("I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever") and Philippians 1:21-30 ("Only live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit ..."). The title of the sermon is "Living in a Manner Worthy of the Gospel," and a copy of the bulletin can be found here: <u>https://fpcofvictoria.org/wp-</u> content/uploads/2023/09/2023-9-24-Bulletin-4-pdf.pdf

Special Program Note

Robert Wyatt is on vacation this week, and thus we once again welcome Marylynn Fletcher to lead us in our music ministry. As an additional joy, Dawn Neel will be singing an anthem solo entitled, "Consecration."



At our meeting this past Sunday, September 17, 2023, the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Texas, elected the following individuals to serve as members of a newly constituted Pastor Nominating Committee:

Billy Leske Dawn Neel Patrick Patterson Bonnie Wilkinson Robert Wyatt

The Commission on Ministry (COM) of Mission Presbytery was notified of the congregation's vote, and a meeting of the newly elected PNC and our church's COM liaison has already been scheduled for later this week.

As the faithful members of our PNC go forward with their work, this would be a good time to remind ourselves that, under Presbyterian polity, a PNC is one of the most independent of all the committees specified in our Book of Order.

The PNC operates entirely independent of any supervision by the pastor, the Session, or the congregation until their work is done. Of necessity, they work quietly, diligently, and discreetly and do not report on the progress of their work until they believe it is appropriate to do so. As tempting as it may be to ask various members of the PNC things like "how's it going?," "do you have any interesting leads yet?," "when do you believe you'll be finished?," such questions are inappropriate, and we should refrain from asking them. Let us trust the Holy Spirit and the faith, intelligence, and abilities of the members of the congregation whom we have elected to fulfill this sacred duty. We will be patient, and we will not be disappointed!

While our PNC tackles the big task ahead, let us be in prayer as, together, we and the PNC seek God's will in Our Journey Forward. May God give the members of our new PNC strength, wisdom, and inspiration as they set about the important work before them.



OUR 2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN IS COMING TO A CLOSE

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

Isaiah 43:19

As you can see in the picture above, we now have 31 "pledge squares" on our Stewardship Quilt. Although our 2024 Stewardship Campaign ends on September 30, 2023, there is still time to complete and turn in your pledge card if you have not already done so.

It appears that a few of our faithful members who turned in a pledge card for 2023 have not yet done so for 2024. The deadline is fast approaching! Please don't let this important step in the financial welfare of our church slip by unattended.

Howsoever you chose to respond, whether by sending your pledge card to the church office or by placing it in the offering plate, may God bless your generosity, and may your gift be used wisely in service to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



NEWS FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN DAY SCHOOL: BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS



Your pastor loves to see our PDS young disciples arrive and leave school with their colorful backpacks. For the youngest among them, the backpacks are often bigger than the children who are carrying them. Nevertheless, the children tote their backpacks with pride and joy. I have learned that if you want

to start a conversation with a preschooler, just ask them to show you their backpack. You will hear mighty tales of "Spidey-man," colorful descriptions of unicorns, talk of ferocious dinosaurs, and reasons for why "Elsa is my favorite princess." Such joy, such happiness, such pride!

It was well and proper, therefore, that we paused to bless all of our young disciples' backpacks at our Children's Chapel service on Tuesday, September 19, 2023. Each child received a nametag for their backpack that said, "My backpack was blessed with love at First Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Texas," together with a miniature flashlight and a small stuffed toy to clip on their backpack.

Pastor Jim also blessed every backpack, praying that God would love and protect all those who wore them, all those who filled and emptied them, and all those who loved the children who carry them to and from school. Jesus loves the little children, and I am sure he loves their colorful backpacks as well!





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

We are officially halfway through the 10 commandments! This past Sunday, we learned all about the 5th commandment, "Honor your parent." After reading our books and singing the 10 Commandments song, we crafted up a picture from from construction paper, and colored a picture of our 'parents' to fit inside the frame. For snack, we used a slice of cake, frosted it and added 2 teddy grahams for the 'parents'.

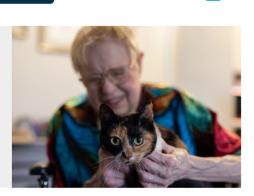
Mark your calendars to join us this Sunday, from 9:45am – 10:15am, as we continue our new multi-sensory series on the 6th commandment. Plus, we will be adding our newly learned commandment to our 'tablets'.

Contact Leila Galvan at 956-367-2234 if you have questions or would like to participate. All are welcome!



MEALS ••• WHEELS SOUTH TEXAS

PAW Pet Care Assistance



Our congregation has heard the call! In August we contributed 197 pounds of cat food and 482 pounds of dog food to the Meals on Wheels Paw Bites program. All the good folks at Meals on Wheels are excited and grateful for this contribution. We need to keep it up. They would like to be able to rely on that level of contribution each month.

Meals on Wheels volunteers take all of the donations they receive, together with all of the pet food they buy, to support the 202 mobility restricted senior citizens they serve that have a pet living with them. The pet food is partitioned out in bags of 5 pounds for cats and 10 pounds for dogs. This means our congregation's contributions in August provided cat food to 39 of their clients and dog food to 48 of their clients. This is overwhelming! Assuming just one cat or just one dog for each beneficiary of the Paw Bites program, FPC supported 87 individuals out of the program's total clientele of 202.

Your support of this important work of God in our community is being felt in the lives of many. We do this in the name of Jesus Christ.

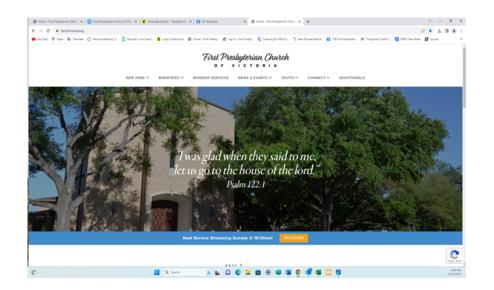




DO YOU KNOW ANY OF THESE WOMEN?

We were recently cleaning out some storage areas in the church building when we came across the lovely, framed pictures shown above. Our suspicion is that these are pictures of past PDS teachers, or maybe PW members or some other organization of our church.

Do you recognize any of these women? If so, please call us (361.575.2771 or send us an email (<u>info@fpcofvictoria.org</u>) telling us what you know. There might be some interesting stories to tell about FPC's history as we view these photographs obviously taken some years ago.



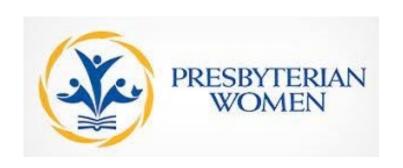
UPDATES TO FPC'S SOCIAL MEDIA

Have you visited our church's social media "platforms" recently? If not, I invite to take some time to scroll through both of them: <u>www.fpcofvictoria.org</u> and <u>www.Facebook.com/fpcofvictoria</u>. Erica Colding, our dedicated and talented Office Administrator, has been updating and improving each of these sites to entice interest and to provide useful information to our members as well as to those who may be looking for a new church home.

For example, at long last we have a "giving link" on our Facebook page that parallels our website. Moreover, there is now also a link on our Facebook page that the reader can click to be taken instantly to our website. On our Facebook page, we are also now periodically posting devotionals from various sources such as *These Days*, and you can now find current copies of our Newsletter. On our website, we have updated information about our adult Sunday School classes as well as our Kingdom Kids multi-sensory bible studies that both meet before our Sunday morning worship services.

On each platform, we are making a concerted effort to post current information about Presbyterian Women, our church committees, and the special projects in which they are involved. For example, we have posted articles about our summer rummage sale (which attracted over 2,000 views on our Facebook page!) and our "End of Summer" fellowship event with hotdogs, games, and a sing-along. More recently, we have featured articles about our mission activities such as our "Paw Bites" donations for Meals on Wheels and our support of the VISD clothing initiative for homeless children. Now more than ever (and especially post-COVID), the vitality of an organization is often gaged, especially by "outsiders," by the vitality of that organization's social media. We are also aware, however, that our social media must meet the needs of the members and friends of our church. We know, for instance, that some 35-80 persons view our worship service online *every week.*

For all these reasons and more, Erica and I are concentrating our media production priorities on: the Sunday bulletin, the weekly Newsletter, and now increasingly the upkeep of our social media platforms. If you have any questions or, better!, suggestions, please share them with Erica or me. In the twenty-first century, often nothing says "active and vital church" better than "active vital social media."



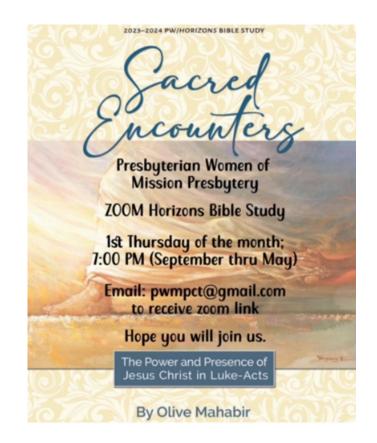
NEWS FROM PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Pease remember our revised schedule for Circle meetings during 2023-24:

Women of Faith Circle 4th Wednesday of the Month 2 pm in the Church Parlor

Evening Circle 4th Tuesday of the Month 6 pm in the Church Parlor

The Horizon Bible Study Guides, *Sacred Encounters*, have arrived and are available for pick up at the church office or for delivery to your door. Please let us know how best we can serve you by contacting Dawn Neel (361-652-3925) or the church office (361-575-2441). The Bible Study Guides are \$10.



Great news for anyone who is unable to attend monthly circle meetings at FPC, Victoria, but who would still like to participate in the Horizon Bible Study.

This year Presbyterian Women of Mission Presbytery is once again hosting the Horizons Bible Study on Zoom. We will be meeting in online sessions on the first Thursday of each month, September - May at 7:00 PM. We hope you will join us as we consider Jesus and Jesus' disciples who shared the Good News through sacred encounters with everyday people.

If you would like to be added to our Zoom bible study invite, please email us at pwmpct@gmail.com.



Our PW Victoria Cluster Fall Gathering will be hosted this year by the women of First Presbyterian Church of Palacios on Saturday, October 14th. In addition to the information contained in the publicity flyer shown above, Ellen Gray, cluster leader and daughter of our own Mardy Ratliff, will be sending us more information in the following weeks. Be sure and mark your calendars for this wonderful fellowship event!



Presbyterian Women mission focus for September 2023 is Affectionate Arms Adult Care.

National Adult Day Care Week is being observed September 18 - 24, so it is appropriate that Presbyterian Women recognize and support this worthy organization at this time. Items needed for Affectionate Arms Adult Care are:

PAPER PRODUCTS

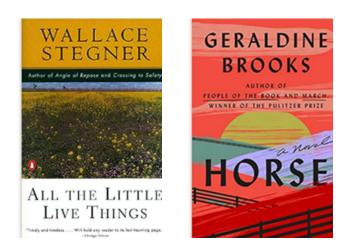
8 oz styrofoam cups for hot liquids
Napkins (standard size)
Paper towels
13 Gallon garbage bags (tall kitchen size)
55 Gallon trash bags
Facial Tissue ("Kleenex")
Small (approx 6") paper plates
Individually wrapped plastic cutlery packets
 ("party packs" silverware kits containing fork, knife, spoon)
Printer Paper (standard size)

FOOD PRODUCTS Sugar Folgers Coffee Medium Roast

PERSONAL CARE

Body Wash Shampoo Conditioner Hand soap

Please assist Presbyterian Women by donating any of the above items. Donations may be left in the Church office.





BOOK CLUB

Won't you join us this Fall for some great books to read and a promise of warm fellowship? Beginning in September, the Book Club will meet on each 4th Tuesday of the month at 1pm in the church parlor. Here is our schedule (happy reading!):

September 26th - *All the Little Live Things* by Wallace Stegner October 24th – *The Marriage of Opposites* by Alice Hoffman November 28th – *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks December TBA – *Comfort and Joy* by Kristin Hannah



VCAM ANNUAL RAFFLE FUNDRAISER

The Victoria Christian Assistance Ministry (VCAM) is selling raffle drawing tickets to support its annual fundraiser. Originally established in 1986 as a food pantry, VCAM is a non-profit organization which serves as a safety net for families in Victoria County in need of food, clothing, and other essentials.

This year's raffle drawing includes \$6,500 in prizes, including \$5,000 in HEB gift cards as well gift cards to local restaurants and retail businesses. Tickets are \$5.00 each or six tickets for \$25.00. The raffle drawing will be held at 12:00 noon, Friday, September 29, 2023, at the VCAM office.

Becky Richter, current member of the VCAM Board of Directors, will be selling tickets at First Presbyterian Church through the remainder of September. Thank you for your continued support of our local outreach.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

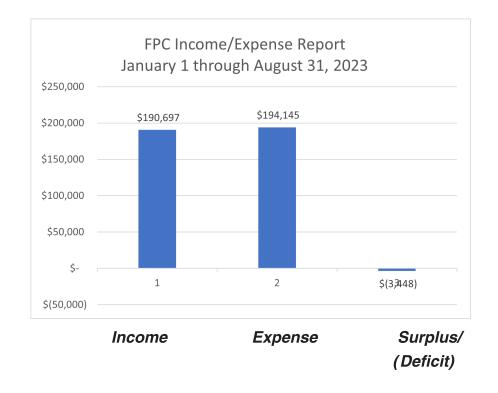
 <u>Nellie Hudson Adult Sunday School Class, Sunday, 9:30 a.m. in the</u> <u>Parlor.</u> This class is continuing their six-week study in the familiar "Being Reformed Faith Seeking Understanding" series, and this time the topic is "Faith and Science." We live in a world of faith and science. As Christians in the Reformed tradition, we recognize our duty to love God with our mind and intellect, as well as our heart and soul and strength (*see* Mark 12:30). We embrace science as one of God's many gifts to his creation, and we do not see it at all as a threat to our faith or as antithetical to religion.

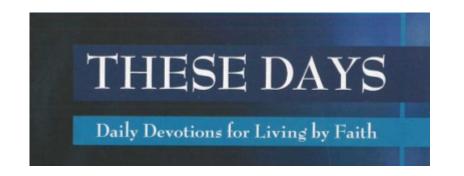
Come and study with us to learn more! Dawn Neel will have copies of the study material for all who wish to participate in this thought-provoking examination of the interaction of faith and science in our journeys of faith.

• <u>*Kid's Kingdom, Sunday, 9:30 a.m.*</u>: Come join us as we continue learning our Commandments, and enjoying snacks with love.

PERIODIC FPC FINANCIAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION (JANUARY 1 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2023)

Although not alarming, through the first eight months of 2023, church expenses exceeded church revenue by \$3,448. Given our congregation's typical month-to-month giving patterns, the Finance Committee anticipates that this deficit will soon be erased as we head into the last four months of the year.





CURRENT COPIES OF "THESE DAYS" HAVE ARRIVED

We have received our quarterly delivery of the most recent edition (October/November/December 2023) of *These Days: Daily Devotions for Living by Faith*. Upon request, we will be happy to mail a copy to any member desiring one. Also, as is our custom, we will place copies of these devotionals 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. Many FPC members faithfully follow the daily devotionals contained in These Days. If you have not previously considered adding the spiritual practice of spending a few moments each day to engage in a quiet, peaceful reflection on your faith, this carefully designed publication is a great way to introduce yourself to that powerful practice.

Peace, grace, and mercy,

Pastor Jim

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