



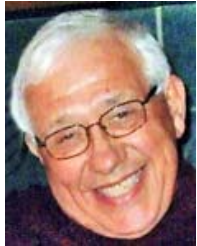
May 3, 2011 fpconline.org

New Worship Times

First Presbyterian Church offers four Sunday worship services: Traditional worship in the Sanctuary at 8:30, 9:30 and 11 a.m. and Contemporary worship in Westminster Hall at 11 a.m.

Childcare

Reserve by contacting Carrie Jowers (210.226.0216, ext. 250 / carriej@fpcsat.org) no later than two days prior to the event. Drop-ins for childcare cannot be accommodated.



Our eyes fixed on Jesus

Pastor's ponderings

Today, as I ponder being a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), two thoughts immediately come to mind. The first is a personal statement I have made many times through the years: "This will never be a perfect church as long as I am your pastor." The longer I live, the more I realize that this is true. While I have many strongly held beliefs and understandings, there is so much I don't know.

Secondly, I never will forget our much-loved executive presbyter in Indianapolis working with our staff for a year, helping us put together a staff covenant. During one of her very helpful presentations, she talked about the fact that we are in a post-denominational world. While denominations were once a very important part of our lives as followers of Jesus Christ, they are dwindling in both numbers and significance.

Realizing that she was a denominational leader, since I knew her well, I asked her how she felt about being an executive presbyter in a post-denominational world. While I don't remember her exact words, I remember that she smiled and said that it was her job to make it as good as it could be even though it was less significant today. The difficult part about denominations, as well as churches, is that they are human organizations within the Body of Christ. I'm certain that the God who called the Church into being, must be disappointed often as God looks at what we have and haven't done.

At about the time you read this edition of my "ponderings," the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) most likely will have passed an amendment to our constitution. Since our General Assembly in July of last year, more than 87 of our 173 presbyteries across the United States will have agreed to replace what was known as the "fidelity and chastity" amendment with a "local

option" amendment. In a nutshell, it deals with who we ordain as Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, elders and deacons. Rather than setting the standard for ordination as being the "requirement to live in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness," it will be up to the presbytery for ministers and the session for elders and deacons to "examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation and suitability for the responsibilities of office."

When it's all said and done, the issue behind all of this is the authority of the Bible in making the decisions about who should and should not be ordained to an office in the church. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), there is a difference in understanding about the part the Bible plays in making that decision. There is also a difference of opinion in what the Bible says is sin and isn't sin.

So, what is the bottom line for us as the people of the First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio? What does it change for us?

—*Pastor's ponderings continues on page 5*

First Press now available on church website

BY SUSAN EMFINGER
COMMUNICATIONS

Did you know that our church newsletter, First Press, is now available on our website? We are offering individuals the option to read the newsletter online instead of receiving a printed version by mail. We can save significant printing and mailing costs, along with valuable time, if individuals choose to read First Press online.

Printed copies of the newsletter will still be delivered to shut in members and mailed to those who do not have access to the web or who prefer to have a hard copy.

If you are currently receiving First Press by mail and would be happy to view it online (note: It is easier to read, and the pictures are in color!), please contact Susan Emfinger (susane@fpcsat.org / 210.271.2728). We will notify you by email as soon as the latest issue is available on the website — long before the hard copy arrives at your door.

Kirk Register

Death
Lelar Phoenix
April 6



Meet our summer interns!

BY THE REV. RUTHIE SEIDERS
FAMILY AND STUDENT MINISTRIES

Make room for our summer interns! Beginning May 23, a few new faces will be seen around our buildings and in worship on Sunday mornings. These young people are our 2011 summer interns who will be working with Family Ministry through the end of July. Each year, FPC offers this opportunity for college students who desire to serve Jesus Christ through work with children or youth. They will participate by building relationships, mentoring, nurturing and helping to facilitate Christian education programs and much more. Please join us in extending a heartfelt welcome to Mary Hodgkins, Hannah Jordan and Mike Weaver.



Mary Hodgkins – Children’s Ministry

Mary has spent most of her life in North Carolina, from her home in Greensboro, to Davidson College, where she is now an English major

approaching her senior year. Since driving through on a family road trip doesn’t actually count, she has never really been to Texas and is thrilled to have a chance to get to know the (second) largest state this summer, and San Antonio in particular! Mary has spent years babysitting, camp counseling and nannying. She is very excited to share the love of Jesus with the kids at First Presbyterian this summer and is eager to see the ways in which God will reveal Himself to them and to her. She looks forward to “meeting all of y’all soon!”



Hannah Jordan – Youth Ministry

Hannah is an English major finishing her sophomore year at Davidson College in North Carolina. She grew up in San Antonio and calls First Presbyterian her home church.

Hannah is elated to be spending her first whole summer in San Antonio with youth, getting to know them and loving them. It brings her great joy to share her life with young people and witness their passion for God and life; therefore, she is excited about the ways in which God will be working this summer. In addition to perusing English literature, Hannah spends an inordinate amount of time playing the violin and hopes to share her love for music with others this summer. She cannot wait to be back home in the great state of Texas!



Michael Weaver – Youth Ministry

Mike Weaver is a rising senior at Trinity University majoring in both Middle Eastern studies and political science. He is a member of the Air Force ROTC at the

University of San Antonio, and upon graduation, will enter active duty as a pilot with the United States Air Force. Prior to being a youth intern, Mike co-led a mid-week Bible study for high school boys from First Presbyterian Church with FPC’s Coby Cagle. He is looking forward to continuing to assist in ministering to the high school boys as well as the rest of the church’s youth this summer. In his off-time, Mike enjoys working out, playing basketball or playing a round of golf.

Mark your calendar for KEYS’ May programs

BY PAT MCCLEARY
OLDER ADULT MINISTRY

First Presbyterian Church’s Older Adult Ministry, KEYS (Keeping Everyone Young in Spirit), has set its May calendar. Save the dates of these upcoming programs:

Friday, May 13: At 11 a.m. in Westminster Hall, Debbie James, RN/MSN, interim director of the nursing education department at Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, will discuss near-death experiences. Twenty years ago when James used

defibrillators to bring patients back to life, she was stunned to find that some people who were revived had interesting stories and reactions to their near-death experiences, “some were upset, some were appreciative.” As a result, she co-authored “Handbook of Near-Death Experiences” and will discuss patients’ reactions and stories. A DVD will be made of the presentation and placed in the FPC library. Call the church no later than

Tuesday, May 10, for a \$7 luncheon reservation. Bridge will be played after lunch.

Friday, May 20: Join us at the Carriage House Bistro at the San Antonio Botanical Garden at 11:30 a.m. to celebrate May birthdays. Those having a birthday will receive a complimentary lunch, and the lunch cost is \$10 per person if you bring a guest. Call the church no later than Monday, May 16, for a reservation.

Easter lily dedication 2011

IN MEMORY OF

Greg, Janet and Elizabeth Anderson
Dr. James E. Bauerle

Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Ayres
Mr. and Mrs. R. Gordon Ayres
Mr. and Mrs. Carl T. Minor Jr.

Corie Barlow
My Loved Ones

Field, Lynnnda and Blaire Barnes
Robert F. Barnes
Forrest H. Sparks
Helen Buescher

Mary G. Baskin and Family
Judge James D. Baskin

Don and Virginia Beeler
Fred and Lois Beeler
Arthur G. Fischer

Michael, Penny, Abbey and Lauren Benavidez
Stanley and Hazel Hines
Ramiro Benavidez

Kay Bondurant
Bill Bondurant

Debby and J.D. Bowen
Dr. Richard G. Ryan

Lollie and Bob Brusenhan
Dr. and Mrs. Jack Wright
Mr. and Mrs. R.L. "Bruce" Brusenhan

Mary H. Bunn
The love of my life, Charles E. Bunn

Jane and Bill Burnett
Dan Davidson

Ron and Genie Calgaard
Our Parents, Palmer and Orrie Calgaard
Arnold and Amanda Flom

His Children, Grandchildren and Great
Grandson
Norman H. Jacobs Jr., M.D.

Her Daughters and Sons-in-law
Sallie W. Embs

John W. Davidson
Marcia Davidson

IN MEMORY OF

Laura A. Davis
Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Davis Jr.

Carrie Davison
Ben Davison, my husband

The Bobby Dullnig Family
Margaret Dullnig
Dorothy DeBona

Richard and Marilyn Ellis
Our Parents, Brother and Daughter

Dean and Lois Elson
Our Parents,
Mr. and Mrs. George F. Howe
Mr. and Mrs. Lee Ray Elson

Marilyn and Will Etheredge
Dan Davidson

Marilyn (Morris) and Will Etheredge
Our Fathers, Paul Morris and Rev. Bill
Etheredge

His Family
Bond Davis

His Loving Family
Leroy Yarbrough

A Friend
Eleanor Mauzé Bray

John and Joella Gordon
Ferdinand, Bernice and Edward Ries
Clem and Lucille Gordon

Her Grandchildren
Sallie W. Embs

Hank and Sally Hadigian
Our Parents

Charlotte Hains
Elizabeth Dee Pappas

Shelly and Marshall Harrell
Our Parents

Karen and Ronald Herrmann
Col. and Mrs. James H. Heizer
Albert and Helen Herrmann

IN MEMORY OF

Pat and Buddy Johnson
G.W. Johnson Jr.,
father of G.W. (Buddy) Johnson III
Dr. and Mrs. E.P. Tottenham,
parents of Pat Johnson

June Khym and Georgia and Mike Heath
Our Loved Ones

The Kirkwood Family
John F. Kirkwood

Grace Bramlette Labatt
Grace Bramlette

Pat and Dick McCleary
Our Loved Ones
Agnes Martin, dear friend

Karen and Ritchie McCulloch and their sons—
Swen, Jamie, Peter, Marshall and Brice
James Ritchie McCulloch Jr.

Ann Maggart and Jack Beckwith
Gloria Beckwith

JoLynne Meador and Family
Jack Musselman
Orvis Meador Jr.
All Our Loved Ones

Diana and Jeff Morehouse
Loved Ones

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Munroe Jr.
Loved Ones

Dr. and Mrs. Claude L. Nabers
Mr. and Mrs. Marquis G. Eaton

B.J. and Ron Neal
Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Cole
Mr. and Mrs. O.D. Neal

Sandy O'Connor
My Dearest Son,
Theodore Russell O'Connor

Becki Olivares and Isaac D. Olivares
Our Loving Daughter,
Sara Elizabeth Olivares

Isaac A., Daniel and David Olivares
Our Beloved Sister,
Sara Elizabeth Olivares

IN MEMORY OF

Doris B. Parker
Ralph E. Parker Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Peterson
Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Hines, parents

Micki, Don and Kate Philbin
Donald R. Philbin III

The Robert B. Price Family
David Coles Price

Nancy and Courtenay Puckett
Glenn Puckett

Mary H. Redpath
Donald and Other Loved Ones

Sallie Riester
Albert Riester
Eric Riester

Bill and Linda Ruhmann
Brad Ruhmann

Martha Samuels
Garry Samuels
Perry Samuels

Anne and Paul Smith
Elsa Schaufele

Richard, Marti, Marlow and James Taylor
James R. McCulloch Jr.

Joni, Tim and Jim Timmins
Dr. Oliver H. Timmins Jr.
Joan Timmins Milburn

Barbara Warren
My Father, Harvey P. Smith
My Sister, Becky Patton

Jane, Robert and Bryan Warren
Spence Warren

Amanda and Jim Williams
Jack T. Williams II
Dr. Norman H. Jacob

The Williams Family
Walter H. Williams

Neil Williams
My Mother, Helen Williams

IN MEMORY OF

Elizabeth H. Wilson
James K. Wilson Jr.
Donna Wilson White

Jean Rogers Winchell
Napier and Mary Jean Rogers, parents
Leroy Yarbrough

Karen Lee and David Zachry
Mrs. Sidney Lindsay
Mr. Robert Archer

IN HONOR OF

Anonymous
Buddy Johnson for his service and devotion to FPC

Field and Lynnda Barnes
Blaire Whitney Barnes

Don and Virginia Beeler
Virginia R. Martin

Jane and Tom Benesch
Jim Capps for his loving and faithful service to First Presbyterian Church during this interim time, holding us together so magnificently

Mary H. Bunn
My Dear Friend, Jean Smith
My Four Wonderful Children—Lynn, Lea, Chuck and Von

Ron and Genie Calgaard
Our Grandchildren—Kathleen Calgaard and Eliot Sands

His Daughters and Sons-in-law
Lowell D. Embs

Dean and Lois Elson
Elaine Dunlap, for her faithful service The interim ministry of Pastor Jim Capps

Katie and Brent Farrimond
The upcoming confirmation of Mollie Farrimond

His Grandchildren
Lowell D. Embs

Karen and Ritchie McCulloch and their Sons—Swen, Jamie, Peter, Marshall and Brice
Martha Ann McCulloch

Dolores Perrine
Jane Perrine, Rachel Perrine and Julianne DeFilippo on their graduations

IN HONOR OF

Micki and Don Philbin
Our Parents

John and Phyllis Pickard
Our Family

Nancy Puckett
Scott and Suzie Simpson
John and Ruthie Seiders

PW Council
Lynn Thompson with love and appreciation for her leadership

Jennifer Quintero
The Stephen Ministers of FPC and their humble service to the church and to the glory of God

Martha Samuels
Rev. John Seiders
Rev. Ruthie Seiders

Anne and Paul Smith
The outstanding staff at First Presbyterian Church

Richard, Marti, Marlow and James Taylor
Martha McCulloch

Suzanne and Ted Terry
Our Children

Helen, Don, Robert and Richard Test
Jane and Ralph Reser

Lynn Thompson
Presbyterian Women

Her Thursday Morning Bible Group
Sandy Sturch with love and appreciation for her leadership

Her Thursday Morning Bible Group
Ann Smith

Her Thursday Morning Bible Group
Emily Peeples

Barbara Warren
My Mom, Jean (Mrs. Harvey P.) Smith

Jean Rogers Winchell
Tom and Jennifer Dooling

Karen Lee and David Zachry
Mr. and Mrs. William Johnson
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Stumberg
Mr. and Mrs. Bartell Zachry

Caregiving, not curegiving — a Stephen Minister's reflection

BY JENNIFER QUINTERO
STEPHEN MINISTRY

It isn't about having all the right answers. It isn't about knowing all the right people. And it isn't even about depth of theological knowledge. But one thing it is about ... is the heart. Stephen Ministry has been a place where church members who share similar gifts of the Spirit have become a family first to each other, but most importantly, an extended family to the grieving among us.

In the midst of training and continuing education, there has been an invisible, divine thread connecting hearts of compassion, sympathy, encouragement and listening. You'd think that in a "listening ministry" there wouldn't be much more to learn about this skill. On the contrary! What we discovered is that human nature kicks in while listening, and that means wanting to solve a problem ... of course with good intentions. And yet, we find ourselves

being humbled in the reminder that even as Stephen Ministers, we are the *caregiver* while God is the *curegiver*. We trust that with God in the midst of our caring, we are reflecting His compassion, understanding and unconditional love. And this is where He works!

In our caring relationships, we walk alongside someone struggling through a grieving situation. Often times, this is a temporary situation. And yet through my own experience, there are also those that will last a lifetime. In either case, here is where we see the face of God. In the book of Acts, we learn that Stephen was not just a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, but that "his face was like the face of an angel." Now, I'm not brave enough to call us angels, but with unshakable faith like Stephen, we do strive to be a reflection of light and hope in the midst of darkness. Through Christ Jesus,



we have redemption and the promise of the Spirit. And this promise is for all of His people, most especially the hurting. It is through this promise that hope remains alive.

What I find as most unique about Stephen Ministry is that we are a family whose members have each been through our own struggles with grief. We have sometimes even been considered "wounded healers." There is a personal aspect to understanding the feelings of despair, loneliness, fear and doubt. But more important is knowing wholeheartedly that God's light shines upon us even as we walk in darkness. And it is this light that cannot be extinguished.

Pastor's Ponderings

-Continued from Page 1

As I pray about and ponder this vexing question, there is a sense in which nothing changes. We still believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God to us and the authority for living our lives. We still wholeheartedly believe that Jesus is the Son of God and Head of the Church, His Body, no matter how imperfect we are as human beings. We still can elect officers and call ministers as we always have. Nothing has changed in our ability to do meaningful ministry within our Family of Faith in San Antonio ... and in the world.

As I have had the privilege of living life alongside of you for 16 months, I have realized that we don't all agree on a lot of the issues confronting our culture today. I have come to love and appreciate some of you with whom I will probably never agree with about certain issues. If we allow it to do so, this is an issue that could severely divide us. Likewise, we are at a very delicate time of transition as the Pastor Nominating Committee searches for the person of God's choosing to be your next senior pastor.

I recommend being very prayerful, slow and deliberate as we move into the future. In August, John Seiders and some of our elders will be going to Minneapolis to find out more about a fellowship forming within the denomination. This may or may not be a direction which we will choose to take.

My dear friends, in the midst of human organizations like churches and denominations, which are always far from perfect, we must keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus and His Great Commission to each one of us. When we keep our eyes on Him, we can believe wholeheartedly that He will lead us into the unknown of the future.



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Help welcome parents in the name of Jesus

BY LEAH BUTLER
FAMILY AND STUDENT MINISTRIES

Do you remember the first time you came to FPC with children? Was there someone to greet you and show you the nursery or preschool classrooms?

Our church is known for its warm, inviting hospitality; therefore, we need volunteer greeters in the first floor lobby each Sunday morning. We are looking for two to three adults to serve once a month, from 9-10 a.m. or 10-11 a.m. Volunteers will welcome our visitors and assist them and their children to their appropriate classrooms. It is fun, exciting and a way to serve Jesus in welcoming our guests.

Contact Leah Butler (leahb9@satx.rr.com) for more information.

Another successful and joyous year for PW

BY LYNN THOMPSON, PRESIDENT
PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



This month, we complete our study of the book of Revelation. It has been a fascinating study with some challenging discussion. My thanks go to the women of First Presbyterian Church, San Antonio. We thank our circle leaders and our moderators immensely, as well as our officers, program chairs and committees for their special dedication in getting every job done so well.

In Revelation 22:2, John writes, “On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nation.” I think this easily describes our Presbyterian Women (PW) — a branch of the tree of life, producing wonderful and different fruit every month, at every gathering, working for healing and supporting one another, our church and so many ministries.

I owe a great deal to our FPC staff, of which I think every single member was involved with PW one way or another, at one time. This year has been filled with great joy for me. I hope that you also have found joy and meaning in our PW activities.

We look forward to our study of The Beatitudes for 2011-12. If you are interested in learning more about our PW groups, come visit us at the FPC Ministry Fair on Sunday, May 22. We can talk about study circles, service circles and events.

Revelation 22:17: “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come, let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”

I give praise and glory to God for this wonderful year, and I wish all my best to those who take it from here on May 22.