



First Press
HOLY WEEK AT FIRST PRES

APRIL 2017 ISSUE • FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?!

BY REV. DR. RONALD SCATES • CO-PASTOR

EMPTY is a condition or feeling that you and I usually want to avoid. Well, I remember one family vacation on a stretch of road between Wichita Falls and Amarillo—with four kids and a dog in the back blissfully unaware, while—Anne and I were in the front desperately praying we’d make it to a gas station as the gas gauge had been on “E” for just at 100 miles. We made it, but if ever a vehicle literally ran on fumes, it was that van on that day!

And, of course, there’s nothing worse than an empty bank account—especially at the end of the month. Or finding an empty milk jug after you’ve just put

your morning oatmeal in the microwave. Bummer! And most of us are all too familiar with those dreaded feelings of emptiness that come with major disappointments, or when we’ve been jilted, or when some promised dream never pans out. Empty is not good. Or is it?

In nearly every area of life, EMPTY is a big fat negative, a downer, a spoiler. Except when it comes at the tail-end of Holy Week, a week which culminates in a tomb—a tomb that is totally EMPTY. Vacant. That is good. That is God. Nature may abhor a vacuum, but Easter loves it! That Easter emptiness is nothing less than God’s “Grand Positive” to a world which is full of sin, disease, and death—a world He so deeply loves, even to death.

The true joy of Easter is that it boldly demonstrates the irony of God’s “Upside-down Kingdom,” where emptiness and death result in fullness of life, where suffering and sacrifice yield a restoration of the purity and bliss of God’s original creation. Easter is the one and only place where the axiom “You can’t get something from nothing” has met its match.

A most blessed and joyous Easter to you and your loved ones from Anne and me. Empty is good!! He is risen!! He is risen indeed!!

+ Ron

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO ONLINE GIVING

This April, First Presbyterian Church is updating its online giving and registration system. The upgrade saves us processing fees and will build on the existing features, such as one-time and recurring online giving, and allows us to accept payments from mobile devices.

The upgrade will impact church members currently enrolled in recurring online giving. If you have registered to regularly give your tithe online, you will need to update your payment information in order for your recurring contributions to continue. Look for an email from Kristina Henderson, Director of Finance and Hu-

man Resources, with step-by-step instructions for updating your payment information.

Your financial donations are a faith commitment to this church that allow us to make Jesus visible in our community and the world. Thank you for your generous participation in First Pres’ ministries. If you have any questions regarding this upgrade, or online giving in general, please contact Kristina at 210-226-0215.

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First Press is published monthly by the First Presbyterian Church San Antonio Communications Team. Deadline to submit content: the 10th of the previous month.

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HOLY WEEK AT FIRST PRES

We are pleased to hold a number of events at FPC during Holy Week:

Palm Sunday, April 9

9:00, 11:00 AM • FPC Sanctuary
Traditional Services with palms
11:02 AM • Westminster Hall
Contemporary Service with palms
4:00 PM • Sanctuary
Sanctuary Choir Concert

Maundy Thursday, April 13

12:00 PM and 7:00 PM • FPC Sanctuary
Maundy Thursday Service

Good Friday, April 14

12:00 PM • FPC Sanctuary
Good Friday Service

Saturday, April 15

10:00 AM • Westminster Hall
Easter Program for Children

Easter Sunday, April 16

6:45 AM • FPC Courtyard
Contemporary Sunrise Service
8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 AM • FPC Sanctuary
Traditional Services

We hope to see you this Easter, and encourage everyone to bring a friend!

WOC MAY COFFEE

Please join the Women of the Church for our annual May Coffee honoring Past Presidents. It will be held at the home of Amanda Williams, 500 Terrell Road, in Terrell Hills, on Wednesday, May 3. All women of First Presbyterian Church are invited to attend and guests are welcome. Beneficiaries of this event include the FPC Children's Center. Complimentary valet parking is available.

MAY 3 • 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

A CLASSICAL MASTERPIECE

The 12th Annual Mary Jean Rogers Memorial Concert

Join us on Sunday afternoon, April 9, to experience a masterpiece of composition from the height of the classical period. The featured work will be Joseph Haydn's 'Missa in angustiis' (mass in time of affliction), universally known as the 'Lord Nelson Mass.' The 'Lord Nelson Mass' was composed over an eight-week period in the summer of 1798, when the monarchies of Europe were terrorized by word of Bonaparte's fleet escaping the British blockade. When Admiral Nelson defeated the French fleet near Alexandria in the Battle of the Nile, the rest of Europe breathed a sigh of relief, and Haydn is believed to have dedicated the mass to the Admiral. The title of the mass is also justified by a performance of the work in September of 1800 when Nelson visited Eisenstadt.

Unlike many mass settings of the classical era, the 'Lord Nelson Mass' is composed in a more symphonic style with several texts set in smaller movements to extend the composition beyond the typical five movements seen in similar settings. Musically, the work often communicates a dramatic quality by employing strings, organ, and trumpets without the use of additional wind instruments. Composed near the end of Haydn's life, his chief biographer, H.C. Robbins Landon states that this work is "arguably Haydn's greatest single composition."

This concert offering is made possible through the Mary Jean Rogers Choral Endowment of First Presbyterian Church, and each year honors the memory of Mary Jean Rogers, the mother of our own Jean Rogers Winchell, and their shared love of the church and great choral music. We hope you will join us for this one hour concert as we begin Holy Week with this masterpiece from the classical period.

APRIL 9 • 4:00 PM • SANCTUARY

PROJECT 240

It's that time again...our spring build for Habitat! This year's event will be on April 30th in the main parking lot. Once again we will be building the framing walls for five houses. This will be our sixth annual event, with the previous five producing walls for 22 houses!

We'll begin this year's build at 11:00 AM, so you can get started right after the 9:30 service, or join in following the 11:00 services if you'd prefer. We'll have a designated build area for the kids, as well as other activities for their enjoyment!

If you'd like to participate in the event but aren't comfortable swinging a hammer, volunteers are needed inside the church to man our tables for t-shirt sales, registration and box lunch sales. We also need help on the build site distributing drinks and snacks. If you're interested in helping with any of these, please contact Fred Wall at fredkwall@aol.com.

Please go to www.fpcsanantonio.org/p240-2017 and click on "registration" drop-down tab to register. And while you're on the site, you can also donate to this year's endeavor, or you can make a donation during Sunday offerings with a check marked with "Project 240" in the memo line. Our financial obligation to Habitat to sponsor this event is \$35,000.

Mark your calendars, and we look forward to seeing you there!

APRIL 30

LITERATURE CIRCLE

If you haven't read any of her many novels, you are in for a special treat when author Paulette Jiles reviews her latest historical novel, "News of the World," for the FPC Literature Circle. Set in post-Civil War Texas, the chaos of the time and place is vividly depicted. It's 1870, north Texas, rainy and cold, as Capt. Jefferson Kyle Kidd travels from town to town giving readings from the latest newspapers, bringing "news of the world" to isolated towns on the Texas frontier. In Wichita Falls, he is asked to return a 10-year-old captive girl to her relatives near San Antonio. She was captured by the Kiowa Indians, speaks no English, eats with her hands but knows how to use a revolver. This is a story of courage, honor and a relationship which resulted in becoming trusting friends.

Bring a friend Tuesday, April 11, to the McCullough Room at 1:00 PM for a social half hour before hearing this exciting story and how Paulette was inspired to write this book.

APRIL 11 • 1:00 PM • MCCULLOUGH ROOM

KEYS VOLUNTEERS AT SA READS

SAReads is a project of Literacy San Antonio, Inc. (LSA) to increase literacy and educational attainment in Bexar County. KEYS Volunteers come together on the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00 AM at the First Mark Credit Union (10730 Gulf-dale Drive) to clean and sort books for distribution. Contact Jane Warren (janewarren@att.net) to receive regular updates on the need for volunteers.



FPC WELCOMES CHRIST OF THE HILLS CHURCH AS NEW ECO SATELLITE

NEW PASTOR SELECTED

A key focus of First Pres in the years ahead is church planting – sponsoring and establishing new ECO churches in and around our region – and we are proud to announce the successful establishment of our first satellite church plant: Christ of the Hills Church in Boerne, Texas!

Last July, organizers of the new church met with our Session, requesting our sponsorship and help establishing the church. After a unanimous vote of support, the organizers went to work naming and growing the church to what is now over 30 worshipers. On November 12, ECO formally accepted the church into the Texas Presbytery of the denomination.

The church has also just selected a new pastor to lead the congregation, the Rev. Dr. John Dearman. John comes to Christ of the Hills from First Presbyterian Church of Conroe, where he served for over five years as Associate Pastor.

What started as worship services in the living room of Dee and Katy Calverley has now moved to the historic Ye Kendall Inn in downtown Boerne, where it holds its Sunday services and Bible studies.

“Christ of the Hills aspires to have a positive impact in the Boerne area by opening its doors to anyone who wishes to experience the grace of the Trinitarian God through the study of the Scriptures,” Katy said. “This includes preaching the unvarnished Word of God, and ministering to the needs of others, including skeptics, the un-churched, or under-churched.”

Please visit Christ of the Hills’ new website, www.christofthehills.org, for more information about the church, including worship times.

We congratulate and welcome Christ of the Hills into the ECO family, and look forward to con-

tinuing our efforts with future church planting!



FPC'S YOUTH SHINE BRIGHT AT BBQ AND TALENT SHOW



On Sunday, February 26, the FPC youth held their annual luncheon, talent show and silent auction. This year we featured a true Texas style BBQ buffet menu, prepared by our fabulous kitchen staff.

The luncheon was attended by the most people the youth ministry has ever hosted, and raised the largest amount of donations ever! The youth ministry would like to say a big “thank you” to everyone who attended the lunch, participated in the silent auction, and/or donated to our summer mission trips.

The talent show featured Benson Meadows, Claire Byrd, Annie Meadows, Josie Mauzé, Kate and Chris Morse, Leah Dooling, and Allie Byrd on various instruments or singing. As always Carter Shute closed the show performing his famous magic show. The students all performed exceedingly well! The attendees were served by our own middle and high school students.

This June 4-9, all rising 6th through 9th graders are invited to join us for Urban Plunge, a week of service partnering with FPC and San Antonio non-profits and outreaches. Students will stay at the church and go out on morning and afternoon excursions to participate in construction projects, VBS, sport camps, nursing homes, and Stop Hunger Now packing events, to name a few. It's going to be a blast!!

All 9th through graduated 12th graders will be traveling to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina June 24-July 1. Our team will be working and serving on work sites and clean up sites from the recent flooding and hurricane, beach ministry, elderly homes and VBS. Hilton Head is a very affluent island, however there is another side of extreme poverty that a majority of people are not aware of. Come join us and see how God can use you to impact the lives of others!

Sign up online now for either of these events at:
www.fpcsanantonio.org/ministries/students



IMPROVEMENTS CORNER FOR THE CHILDREN'S CENTER

The Children's Center renovations are almost complete. Our first floor is turning into a beautiful and inviting environment.

We would love to extend new and welcoming changes to our outdoor environment by updating our playgrounds. We are in need of your talents and skills to help make this a successful project. If you enjoy gardening and/or wood working this may be an opportunity to share your gifts with the young children of FPCC. The center is also currently collecting baskets, fabric scraps, throw pillows and frames for our classrooms.

The following are some pictures to get our creative minds working:



We thank you all ahead of time for your help and support towards the Children's Center. Please reach out to the director of the Children's Center, Monica Guzman or any church member of our Children's Center Committee:

— Becka Byrd, Lady Romano, Linda Ruhman, Marti Taylor, Pat O'Neill, Jim McCann

AN AMAZING TIME AT KEYS

BY SHEILA FIGUEROA



Hi! My name is Sheila Figueroa and I wanted to let you know what an amazing time I had at the February KEYS luncheon on February 24th in Westminster Hall!

Guess what? I found out you do NOT have to be a member of KEYS to attend any of their functions. Anyone is invited to attend the luncheons, events, etc. It does not matter your age, or if you are a member of First Presbyterian Church, or whether or not you are retired. It does not matter!!

I have a day job Monday through Friday, but was very interested in hearing Chuck Swisher, who is a nationally-recognized, award-winning champion bull fighter. Back in the old rodeo days, all the people who protected the bull riders were called rodeo clowns. A few years back the rodeo association made two distinctions: the rodeo clowns are the ones who protect the bull rider, but also they are comedians, endearing themselves to the audience. The bull fighter's job is to protect the bull rider (and cowboys) at all costs—they are there to protect the bull rider, NOT to entertain the audience.

I was so mesmerized by what Mr. Swisher said. He told us about his family life (he lives in Dover, Oklahoma, a little bitty town, and is the youngest of six children). He told us how he was an avid skate boarder and then one day he decided to be a bull fighter. Just like that. From one day to the next. His friends at his high school thought he had lost his mind! But then he started talking about his faith in Jesus Christ, and how he has carried that faith forward in everything he does. Mr. Swisher said that every morning when he wakes up, whether or not his body is sore and hurting from the night before, whether or not he was thrown by a bull, or whether or not he got enough sleep, he opens up his Bible and reads the Scriptures. I started squirming in my chair because usually the first thing I think of when I wake up is getting and drinking a cup of coffee!! Mr. Swisher talked about not always being invited out by some of the cowboys because of his faith, and how he felt about that. He has our Lord in his life—and that is all that matters. Mr. Swisher prays a lot too and is such a humble man. He gives all the glory to our Lord. I started squirming again because I don't think...no, I KNOW...that I don't always give glory to our Lord. Ugh!!!

Anyway, I just wanted to let the readers know that ANYONE can attend the speaker events and luncheons, and participate in any of the activities that KEYS publicizes. The luncheons usually cost \$8.00 per person, but you can attend the talks for free. Just make sure if you want to eat lunch that you make a reservation so there is enough food. The speaker usually speaks from about 11:10ish until Noon. Then lunch is served afterwards.

Joe Moore is the Director of KEYS and I thank him so very much for thinking outside the box and asking a rodeo person to speak at our church during the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo!

I learned so much that day. I am not a rodeo person, but I was amazed at what I learned...about bull fighting, bull riding and faith in Jesus Christ.

There are two more fun facts about that day—I am in my 50's and Chuck Swisher is 26 years old. We can all learn something—especially from someone younger—if we will just take the time to do it. People like Chuck Swisher give me hope.

I learned all this at a KEYS luncheon. Praise God and to God be ALL the glory!!

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH | BY LINDA RITTENHOUSE, PRESIDENT

The annual Spring luncheon held recently by Women of the Church in Westminster Hall was both a wonderful success and a joyous occasion for all in attendance! Our speaker, longtime FPC member Susan Kerr, delivered an inspirational and heartfelt message about her own journey of faith and shared thoughts about her book, *Intersections of Grace: Reflections on a Life of Faith*. We are very grateful for Susan's presence at our luncheon and for her remarks that served to illuminate even more fully the unique and insightful observations in her book.

I would like to thank our Luncheon Committee comprised of Chairman Pat Krueger, Manette Owen, Mary Frances Churchill, Mary Ellen Mauze, Rhae Chell Mauze, Karla Keahey, Sarah Quirk and Jan Fischer, and also Debra Sirakos and Sue Cunningham. Many thanks, in addition, to Maurilio Garza, Jr. and his excellent kitchen staff for a delicious lunch; to Janie Jimenez and her equally excellent household staff for setting up the rooms; to Susan Dulling and the administrative staff for their invaluable help; and to our devoted Women of the Church members who served as our wonderful volunteer waitresses.

Additionally, we enjoyed opportunities to purchase the beautiful Spring table centerpieces and the delightful gifts from Sus Hijas. It was especially gratifying to be able to acquire Susan Kerr's book, personalized and autographed by the author.

One of the highlights of the day was the unanimous election of an impressive slate of Women of the Church Officers and Program Chairmen for 2017-2018 presented by Nominating Chairman, Jane Ann Temple. We are very grateful that the following women have answered God's call to serve:

- 2017-18 Officers**
President: Pat Brodeen
President-Elect: Holly Youngquist
Vice-President for Circle: Barbara Dorsey
Vice-President for Directory: Grace Labatt
Vice-President for New Members: Suzie Simpson
Recording Secretary: Suzanne Norton
Corresponding Secretary: Elaine Dunlap
Treasurer: Sue Cunningham
Assistant Treasurer: Nancy Black
Historians: Anne Scates, Nona Hall
Parliamentarian: Bonnie Diehl
Church Officer Nominating Representative: Ann Bunn
WOC Nominating Committee: Janet Wernli
Immediate Past President: Linda Rittenhouse

- 2017-18 Program Chairmen**
Personal and Family Life (Moderators): June Eubank
HNS: Ann Fryburger, Laura Johnstone
HNS Gala Basket: Mary Frances Churchill
Pres. Children's Home: Marilyn Morris-Etheredge
Christmas Families Ministry: Diane Carssow,
Nancy Puckett, Tina Lyons

Among other recent events for Women of the Church was the beautiful and absolutely delicious Staff Appreciation Brunch held for the ministers and staff of the church. Our Invisible Angels, under the very capable leadership of Chairman Holly Youngquist and her committee of Barbara Dorsey, Judy Kruger and Suzanne Thomas, and with the assistance of Bunkie Shed and her Circle 20 Service Circle, treated many to an unforgettable feast of fabulous food! Our sincerest gratitude to all who made contributions to honor our wonderful FPC staff.

Additionally, WOC helped provide refreshments for the Habitat for Humanity build on February 28. Many thanks to Pat O'Neill and Martha James for obtaining and delivering 'nourishment' to the workers at the site. Please see the photos in this article that show an important community effort supported by Women of the Church to help make Jesus visible.

Women of the Church now look forward to our annual Coffee to be held on Wednesday, May 3 from 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM. Amanda Williams has graciously offered to open her lovely home at 500 Terrell Road for our final event of the year. All women who belong to First Presbyterian Church are invited, and guests are also welcome. It will be a joyous occasion as we celebrate our Past Presidents and another year filled with multiple service projects, treasured friendships and many blessings. Our beneficiaries for this year's offering include the FPC Children's Center. We sincerely thank Candy Wagner, May Coffee Chairman, as well as her committee, and we extend heartfelt appreciation to our hostess, Amanda Williams.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

—Matthew 5:16

- BIBLE CIRCLE 1/12**
Monday, April 17 • 10:30 AM
FPC: Geneva Room
Lunch (optional): \$8.00
Chair: Suzanne Thomas 846-3240, suzannethomas54@gmail.com
Moderator: Grace Labatt
Study: *Women of the Bible* by Ann Spangler and Jean Syswerda

- BIBLE CIRCLE 2/4**
Monday, April 17 • 1:30 PM
FPC: Red Room (226)
Chair: Char-An Witten, hm: 341-1856/c: 602-7085
Study: *Her Name is Woman* by Gien Karssen

- SHAWL MINISTRY CIRCLE 5**
Friday, April 21 • 12:00-1:00 PM
FPC: Room 228
Members bring food to share
Chairs: Jane Ann Temple 414-9956, Kay Weber 288-5290

- BIBLE CIRCLE 6**
Tuesday, April 18 • 1:30 PM
FPC: Geneva Room
Chair: Mimi Hart, 822-0809
Study: *Intersections of Grace* by Susan Kerr, chapters 22 & 38
Topic: Crossing to safety/Eternal life

- BIBLE CIRCLE 7**
Tuesday, April 18 • 11:30 AM
Co-Hostesses: Jeannie Dullnig and Judy Spencer (227 Abiso Ave/828-0347)
Fiesta lunch provided
Chair: Mary Ellen Mauze 826-1312/memaue@gmail.com
Moderator: Jeanne Dullnig
Study: *Intersections of Grace* by Susan Kerr, chapters 22 & 38
Topic: Crossing to safety/Eternal life

- CIRCLE 8 MOM'S GROUP**
Tuesday, April 4 • 7:30 PM

- Mom's Night Out Dinner at Wildfish (1834 N Loop 1604 W, 78248)
Tuesday, April 18 • 9:30-11:30 AM
FPC: Room 108
Fiesta Safe Rides: Uber talk by Lilly and Petty Cab How-To by Sara

- Chairs: Sara Parish 394-0865/sara23sc@hotmail.com, Lilly Gretzinger 601-0575/lilly@bunngroup.com, Meg Walker 601-7745/meg@aladdinleans.com
RSVP for childcare 2 days prior to Sonya Wright at sonyaw@fpcsat.org

- BIBLE CIRCLE 9**
Tuesday, April 18 • 10:00 AM
FPC: Breakfast Room
Chairs: Jan Magnus 829-5866, Pat Brannen 735-4415
Moderator: Members of Circle 9
Study: *Intersections of Grace* by Susan Kerr, chapters 22 & 38
Topic: Crossing to safety/Eternal life

- BIBLE CIRCLE 11**
Monday, April 24 • 6:30 PM
Home of Sheila Figueroa, hostess, (335 Melrose Dr. 78212)
Dinner provided by various members
Chair: Karin Gabrielson 843-2475
Moderator: TBD
Study: *Intersections of Grace* by Susan Kerr, chapters 22 & 38
Topic: Crossing to safety/Eternal life

- LITERATURE CIRCLE 13**
Tuesday, April 11 • 1:00 PM
FPC: McCullough Room
Chair: Jeanne Browning 824-3921
Book: *News of the World* by Paulette Jiles
Reviewer: TBD

- BIBLE CIRCLE 14**
Monday, April 17 • 12:00-1:00 PM
FPC: St. Andrews Room
Lunch: By reservation

- Chair: Marilyn Morris-Etheredge 861-4314/mmorris.etheredge@yahoo.com
Moderator: Amy Robinson
Study: *Women of the Bible* by Ann Spangler and Jean Syswerda

- MARJORIE MCLERNON SEWING CIRCLE 16**
Wednesday, April 19 • 9:30 AM
FPC: Room 228
Chair: Lee Pressly 735-0978

- EDNA RALSTON SEWING CIRCLE 17**
Wednesday, April 12 • 9:30 AM
FPC: Room 309
Lunch: Bring \$1 for soup provided by kitchen, members bring dessert
Chair: Jeanne Baker 494-0972
Vice Chair: Gigi Duke 695-4363

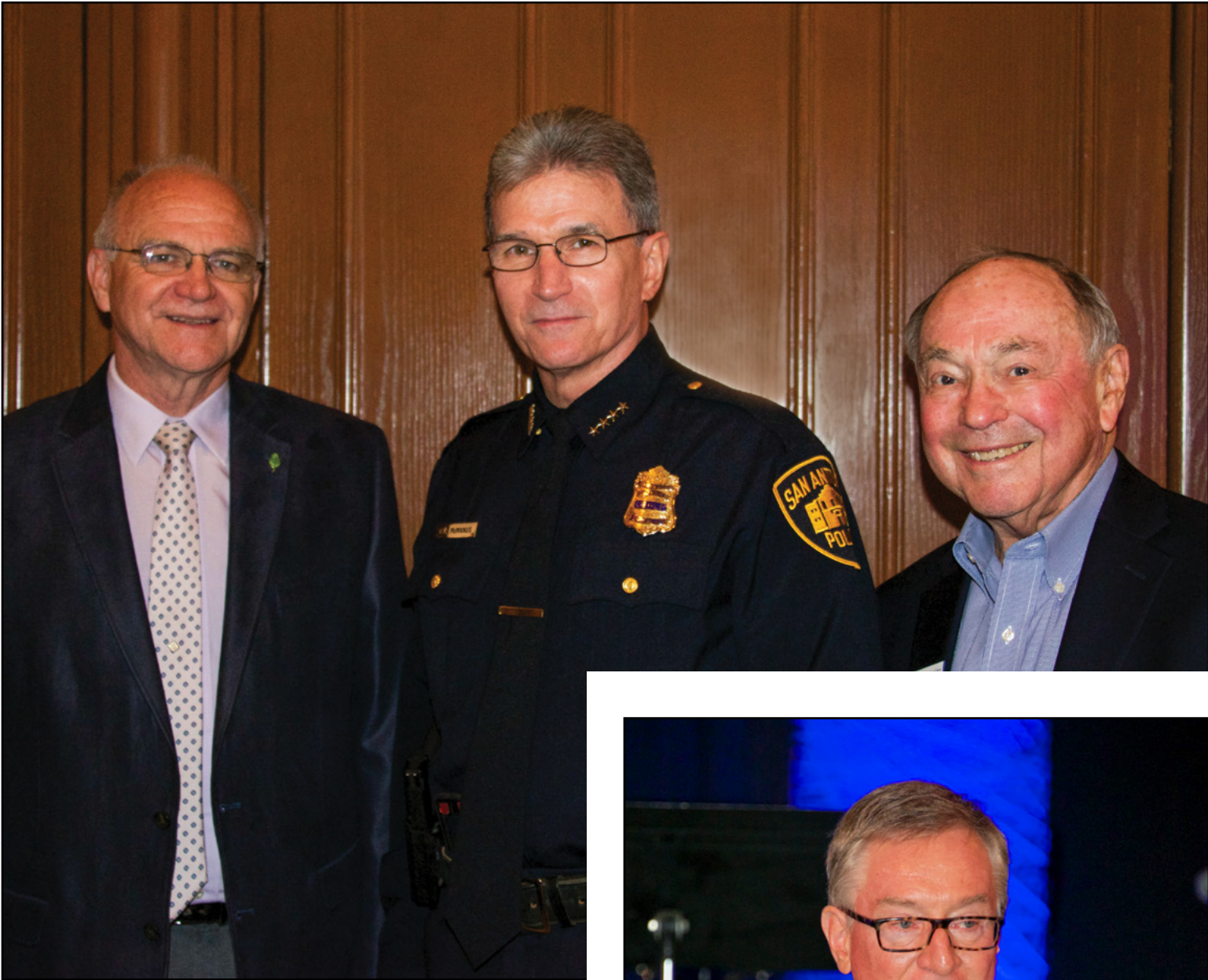
- CIRCLE 18 CARE AND CONCERN**
No meeting date
Chairs: Char-An Witten 341-1856, Georgia Heath 695-9511

- CIRCLE 19 WHITE CROSS CIRCLE**
Wednesday, April 5 • 9:30 AM
FPC: Room 309
Lunch: The kitchen makes soup (bring \$1) and provides water and coffee, a member will provide dessert
Chair: Janet Beauch 673-3251

- CIRCLE 20 CIRCLE OF SERVICE**
No meeting date
Chair: Bunkie Shed 824-6690

- CIRCLE 21 WOMEN'S EVENING BIBLE GROUP**
Contact Chair for meeting date/location
Dinner: Members provide buffet dinner and dessert
Chair: Andrea Taylor 403-9442/paladianpl@aol.com
Moderator: Member rotation
Study: *Intersections of Grace* by Susan Kerr, chapters 22 & 38
Topic: Crossing to safety/Eternal life





“I don’t come to KEYS because I am not a ‘member.’”
“I don’t come to KEYS because I can’t stay for lunch.”
“I don’t come to KEYS because I am not ‘old enough.’”
These are all statements that we have heard, but none of them are true!! KEYS does not have a membership list, and even though KEYS is a part of Older Adult Ministry, you don’t have to be “Old enough” to attend our events, and you don’t have to stay for lunch on Fridays either. KEYS is a fellowship for anyone who is able to attend and we hope you will take advantage of the activities.



APRIL EVENTS:
APRIL 7: REV. LORNA JEAN MILLER will be speaking to us about the Church in Cuba. Rev. Miller, who has personal experience in Cuba, is the pastor at Grace Presbyterian Church in San Antonio.
APRIL 13: GOOD FRIDAY - No program
APRIL 16: EASTER SERVICES
APRIL 18: AARP SMART DRIVER • 9:00 AM – 1:30 PM
You can save money on your auto insurance and get all the latest driving tips? Sign up for the AARP smart driver course held at FPC. For AARP members, the fee is \$15; for non-members, it is \$20.00 and will be taught by our own Kay Kutchins. To sign-up contact Stephanie Garcia (stephanieg@fpcsat.org or 210-271-2753)
APRIL 21: FIESTA AT FIRST • 10:45 AM
Note: earlier time to accomodate King Antonio’s Arrival at 11:00 AM. Fiesta at First with mariachies, royalty, and birthdays. Annual Fiesta celebration includes a visit by the Texas Cavaliers’ King Antonio, Michael A. Casillas. “Mike” says, “I look forward to seeing all of San Antonio united in celebration of the different cultures that together make San Antonio the great city it is, and I hope to spread the message that an act of kindness is the greatest gift you can give or receive.” We are excited to have King Antonio with us, even for just a quick visit.
APRIL 28: NO KEYS EVENTS DUE TO FIESTA CELEBRATIONS
APRIL 30: PROJECT 240



We are working on details for trips with the Holloways and a tour of the new exhibit at the Witte. Coming in May, we will be hearing from Bill Howland from The Academy of Learning in Retirement, and Rich Garza, Chaplain of the San Antonio Spurs.

HISTORY CORNER: A TALE OF TWO CHURCHES

BY BILL COGBURN

Roz and I recently spent a weekend with friends in Victoria, Texas. While there, we attended services at their church – First Presbyterian, Victoria which was organized in 1841 – five years before First Pres San Antonio. Arriving at the church a bit early, I had time to read the historical marker out front. My interest was piqued when I ran across familiar names from our own church history. A bit of research reveals interesting connections between our two congregations. In the 1840s, both churches were desperately struggling to get a foothold for the gospel in frontier Texas.

In June 1846, just four months after the Republic of Texas became a part of the United States, John McCullough arrived in San Antonio to organize the first Protestant Church in the city. Just three years into his ministry, tragedy struck when his young wife, Lorena, died during a cholera epidemic. Discouraged, heartbroken and suffering ill health himself, McCullough left his ministry in San Antonio and returned to Galveston to teach school. Without leadership, San Antonio’s First Presbyterian Church became inactive.

Victoria’s Presbyterian congregation started constructing their church building in 1841, but before a roof and flooring could be installed, their funds ran out. Reverend Daniel Baker, President of Austin College came to their rescue. After a series of evangelical sermons, Victoria’s congregation gained enough momentum to raise the funds to finish their church building and pay a permanent minister.

Reverend Baker, known as the “father of Austin College,” also came to the rescue of our church. In 1851, he preached a “divine service” at the Old Adobe and, acting as moderator, enrolled nine persons in the reorganized church: John C. Atwater, Samuel Newton, his son Frank McCarty Newton, Mrs. John Vance, Mrs. Ann Walker, Miss Lucy Jane Newton, Mrs. Silbert, Mrs. Samuel Newton and Miss Ellen M. J. Josleyn. Dr. Baker ordained and installed Samuel Newton and John Atwater as ruling elders.

Fast forward to the summer of 1921, when First Pres

called the Reverend Pierre Bernal Hill to be senior pastor. Over the next twenty years, P. B. Hill became a much loved preacher, not only among his home town parishioners but his radio audience as well. He saw the radio as a way to extend his ministry far into the rural areas of Texas. Dr. Hill’s casual delivery was ideally suited to radio. His voice was described by some as “spellbinding.” His name became familiar to families on remote ranches in the Hill Country where his radio ministry was referred to as “the Church in the Hills.”

Dr. Hill retired as pastor of First Pres in the fall of 1940 to his ranch home near Hunt, Texas in his beloved Hill Country, but he continued to record his weekly sermons at the WOAI studio for several more years. During WWII, General Dwight Eisenhower asked the BBC to provide these special radio broadcasts to U. S. armed forces. A BBC technician was flown from London to San Antonio and through the cooperation of WOAI and BBC, transcriptions of Dr. Hill’s sermons were returned to London where they were broadcast to the Allied Troops on the Western Front. The last sermon was broadcast on May 7th 1945 – the day Germany surrendered.

Dr. Hill’s oldest son, Samuel, thought long and hard about becoming a rancher. He was a big, strong lad, six feet four inches tall with sandy hair like his fathers. He finally decided to enter the ministry and studied at the Austin Theological Seminary, receiving his Bachelor of Divinity degree. He married a pretty girl whom he met in college.

In 1941, Sam Hill was a pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Beeville when he accepted a call to First Presbyterian Church in Victoria, a rich cattle town in the brush land near the Gulf Coast. Sam was said to be a good man and an inspiring minister -- lean and tall like his father. He had a reputation of being a good administrator, patient and forbearing. But he still longed to be a rancher. He dressed in blue jeans and boots and when time allowed, worked with cattle on his neighbor’s ranches.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, thirty-six-year-old Sam Hill watched many fresh-faced boys of eighteen and

twenty go off to war. When he could stand it no longer, he went quietly to nearby Foster Field and applied for a commission. He was sworn in as a lieutenant in the Air Force. This left the Victoria church with no pastor for the war’s duration.

As the elders searched for another preacher they remembered Sam’s father, Dr. Bernard Hill, who was then sixty-five and still active. When the elders asked Bernard if he would be interested in filling in while Sam was gone, he said later that he did his best to hide his eagerness when he agreed.

The plaque in front of the Victoria church shows Samuel B. Hill pastor from 1941 to 1948 and his father, Bernard Hill, from 1942 to 1946.

Our Victoria friends told us to be prepared for an interesting experience at their church on Sunday morning. It turned out to be not only interesting, but remarkable and beautiful!

First Presbyterian Victoria, like many churches these days, finds their congregation to be aging and diminishing in number. If that wasn’t bad enough, they unexpectedly lost their pastor a short time back. Mt. Nebo Baptist Church, a nearby, predominately Black church with a robust congregation, was searching for temporary quarters. They needed a place to worship while their building was being demolished and rebuilt—and they happened to have a dynamic preacher.

Officials from the two churches met, proposed the idea to their respective congregations, and both enthusiastically agreed to have combined Sunday worship in Victoria First Pres’ sanctuary for as long as needed. What we witnessed that Sunday morning was a wonderful example of unity and brotherhood all taking place in God’s house. A perfect win-win solution, I’d say! (And the Mt. Nebo choir really rocks “Amazing Grace”!)



REV. DANIEL BAKER
REORGANIZED FIRST PRES
CHURCH (1851)



DR. HILL
IN HIS STUDY AT FIRST PRES (1921)



REV. P. B. HILL
FIRST PRES PASTOR
(1921-1940)



P. B. HILL
IN UNIFORM AS CHAPLAIN OF
THE TEXAS RANGERS.

Source: Donald Everett’s, Adobe Walls to Stone Edifice, For God and Texas – The Life of P. B. Hill, by Green Peyton, The First One Hundred Years of First Presbyterian Church by Olive Adelaide Hill Paschal, The First Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Texas.

PHOTO OF P.B. HILL IN UNIFORM FROM S. A. LIGHT (1929) COURTESY OF INST. OF TEX CULTURES.

BEYOND THE STAINED GLASS | BY KEVIN DAILEY, CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER



What kind of person are you?

There is a phrase I hear quite often and I never really think about asking this question. The phrase is when someone makes the declaration to what kind of person they are. For example:

“I don’t want to eat fish, I’m not a seafood person.”

“I really don’t want to take care of your cat, I’m more of a dog person.”

This is what I'm talking about. Trying to do some inner reflection on what type of person I am. It's easier to say what kind of people we aren't. I'm not an onion person, yet there isn't a vegetable I solely pledge allegiance to. I refute the Gospel of the onion though. I think they're gross. Same goes with pets. I know I am a dog person. I am not a cat person, yet that doesn't mean that I solely regard one type of domesticated animal over all others and find the rest to be abhorrent.

But we do this. We make generalized overarching statements about what kind of people we are, based on tastes or preference. But what kind of people are we really?

When I think about Christmas I get excited. I used to not. Not that I hated it, but I never got into the pageantry of Christmas. Not until God blessed me with two wonderful daughters did I fully become a “Christmas Person.” Now I love it. One might say that as followers of Christ we are all Christmas people. Anxiously waiting for the savior of our world to come and make everything new again. We celebrate the season of advent with great reverence and the birth of Jesus with joy to the world!


These past couple of weeks we have begun walking through the season of Lent. It's a very different feel than the Advent season. Instead of expectation there is sorrow, instead of celebration there is sacrifice. And to be fair, the story of Jesus' crucifixion is harrowing. The images of the physical pain. The person-

al humiliation. Seeing those you love so much, and spent so much time with caring for them and teaching them, turning their backs, and crying out to His Father asking why He had forsaken Him. It's not an image that we like to align our personalities with.

But this is what Jesus did. He became the sin that you and I would commit centuries before they would happen so when God the Father looked upon us he saw the righteousness of Jesus (2nd Corinthians 5:21). What this did was establish what kind of people we are. We are Easter people. We are people marked by the irresistible love of God, by the resurrection. We are no longer slaves to fear, sin and death, but we are children of the Cross. We are Easter people.

As we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus and do the activities that have come to surround it; as we gather for worship and celebrate with children; as we have a meal with loved ones and enjoy the spring, may we always be reminded of who we are—and the price that was paid to make us who we are. We are Easter people.

MOMENTS TO HOLD CLOSE | A PERMANENT DWELLING | BY MANNY RODRIGUEZ



I was speaking to a friend of mine about his housing situation. The lease on his apartment was coming up, but he had yet to find the house he actually wanted. As he talked to me he weighed his options, “I can sign another lease, meaning I’m trapped here for another year, or I did find another apartment but again that is simply just another temporary solution. I want to find the right permanent dwelling. I just want to go home.” Don’t we all feel that way periodically? We see people that cheat with their finances, lie to their employers, do not comply with contractual obligations, and the list goes on and on. Basically we live in a culture where a society does not play by the rules, and yet they seem to prosper from it. Witnessing this can easily

just drain us to the core, we feel like we don't belong or fit in, and the simple answer is, we don't. We don't because this earthly existence is nothing more than temporary housing, and what we really long for is to go home. And eventually, we will reside in the home that our Father has waiting for us, the one we were meant to spend an eternity in. Until then, we just need to recognize that we need to sign the best lease that we can, knowing it's just that—a lease.

Easter Lilies

Each year, the congregation has an opportunity to remember a loved one or honor an individual by purchasing a lily in the amount of \$15. These plants are placed in the chancel for Easter Sunday. Participate by sending a check made payable to The Sanctuary Flower Committee and mailed to First Presbyterian Church, c/o The Sanctuary Flower Committee, 404 N. Alamo, 78205-1918. You may also place completed forms and checks in the Sanctuary Flower Committee mailbox in the workshop.

**Requests received later than April 2, 2017,
will miss the insert printing deadline.**

PLEASE RESERVE ONE PLANT

In honor of: _____

OR

In memory of: _____

Given by: _____

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