



# *First Press*

## **HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP 2017**

**AUGUST 2017 ISSUE • FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**





# BECOMING A HOUSE OF PRAYER

BY REV. DR. BOB FULLER • CO-PASTOR

During one of his crusades in the 1980’s, a local pastor asked evangelist Billy Graham a question: “What is the best way for our church to reach the city for Christ?”

Dr. Graham replied that “the three most important things you can do are to pray, pray, pray!”

On another occasion, Graham said, “The men upon whose shoulders rested the initial responsibility of Christianizing the world came to Jesus with one supreme request. They did not say, ‘Lord, teach us to preach,’ ‘Lord, teach us to do miracles,’ or, ‘Lord, teach us to be wise.’ They said, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’”

Something powerful happens when the body of Christ prays together. With that in mind, this fall we are launching a new Wednesday evening, midweek, ministry called the House of Prayer. The name comes from Isaiah, repeated by Jesus in the gospels. Isaiah said: “I will bring them to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer...for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” (Isaiah 56:7)

Our vision is to make Jesus visible by gathering for prayer together at the church once a month, and then praying around the city in one another’s homes and neighborhoods.

First, on Wednesday, August 30 (the Wednesday after kickoff Sunday, August 27), we will hold a “big house” prayer meeting in Westminster Hall. This will be a time for our church family to gather together around the table, to meet and know one another, to study God’s word, and to learn about prayer.

Each following week beginning Wednesday, September 6, we will gather in small groups in homes (the “little houses”) all over the city to pray together, practice what we have learned and talk about how God is showing up in our lives.

While it is important for each of us to pray on our own, praying together unites us in a visible way and says “these are the things we believe as followers of Jesus Christ.” When we pray together:

- 1. We are saying, “God, *you are real*. You really exist. You are really there, and I am not the center of the universe.”
- 2. We are saying, “We not only believe you are real, we also believe that we need you” (Author John Piper says that asking God for what we need is a form of worship, because we are saying to God, “You can help us like no one else can, because there is no one like you. We need help and we can’t do this alone.”).
- 3. When we pray, we are telling God, “*We love You.*”

And related to that...

- 4. When we pray, we are telling God, “*We trust you*” (“I trust you enough to expose my need to you; I can tell you whatever we need, whatever makes me angry, my frustrations, my deepest desires, and I know that you will receive them and still love me.”)

Prayer is not a sacrament, but it is sacramental, because prayer is one way we take hold of the God who has taken hold of us. Please join us in the “House of Prayer” as a participant, a host or as a leader. Let’s “pray, pray, pray,” and watch as the Holy Spirit uses these gatherings to fan the flames of curiosity and draw people to Christ and His Church.

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PATHWAYS TO HOPE 2.0

The PATHWAYS TO HOPE Conference is just around the corner. This year’s conference, held at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, 100 Auditorium Circle, will build on the tremendous response to last year’s conference. Two of our featured speakers will be Sheila Walsh and Rev. Brad Hoefs, who will share their experience as to how faith communities can help individuals and families dealing with mental illness.

Sheila Walsh began her career as a contemporary Christian singer and evangelist for Youth for Christ in Great Britain. In 1987, she co-hosted the 700 Club with Rev. Pat Robertson until 1992 when Sheila began to deal with bouts of serious depression. She wrote about her experience of dealing with depression and her Christian faith in her book *Honestly*. To date, Sheila has written over seventeen books, often speaks to Women of Faith conferences, and continues her work as a singer and songwriter. Her most recent book is *In the Middle of the Mess*.

Pastor Brad Hoefs has served as pastor of the Community of Grace Lutheran Church in Omaha, Nebraska since its inception. In 1995, Pastor Hoefs was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder after his own very public episodes of mania. While dealing with his own mental illness, he found a lack of understanding of the illness in the general Christian community, and a lack of support for individuals and families dealing with mental health issues. Out of his experience he started Fresh Hope, a Christ-centered support group for those who suffer from mood disorders and for their families. Today, Brad continues his ministry at Community of Grace Church and works with churches throughout the country in establishing their own mental health ministries.

Other speakers at the conference this year include Dr. Nancy Kehoe (Harvard Dept. of Psychiatry and a member of the Religious of Sacred Heart), Dr. Warren Kinghorn (Duke Dept. of Psychiatry and Duke Divinity School), and Dr. Sidney Hankerson (Columbia Univ. Dept. of Psychiatry).

The conference will offer workshops on both Friday and

AUGUST 11

Saturday mornings followed by plenary presentations each day. And for the first time, the conference will feature a Youth Event on Friday evening, August 11.

Once again the conference is FREE to all who register through [www.pathwaystohope.net](http://www.pathwaystohope.net). Major sponsors for this conference include First Presbyterian Church, the Bexar County Health Collaborative, and the Bexar County Office of the County Judge.

Share information about PATHWAYS TO HOPE with your family, neighbors, friends and co-workers, so that others may find HOPE.

KEYS KICK-OFF

KEYS will kick-off its regular schedule of luncheons with, San Antonio native and American Idol finalist, Haley Scarnato. Haley will be sharing about what she has been doing since Idol and singing some of her favorite songs. Call/email Stephanie at 210-271-2753 or [Stephanieg@fpcsat.org](mailto:Stephanieg@fpcsat.org). KEYS events are open to everyone. The cost is \$10 pp (includes lunch). Begins at 11:00 AM.

SEPTEMBER 8

LOAVES AND FISHES

Our Monthly Loaves and Fishes meal for the homeless population of San Antonio will be served on Sunday, August 31. You can donate a casserole dish or fresh fruit to supplement our regular offerings and/or you can join us at 2:30 PM to welcome our guests.

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LITERATURE CIRCLE SUMMER READING

FPC Literature Circle announces 2017-2018 books:

SEPTEMBER 12: *A Dog’s Journey*  
by W. Bruce Cameron (Rev. Scott Simpson)

OCTOBER 10: *Trapp Family Singers, ‘The Sound of Music’*  
by Maria Augusta Trapp (Bill and Patrice Hensley)

NOVEMBER 14: *A Gentleman in Moscow*  
by Amor Towles (Ann Smith)

DECEMBER 12: *Circling the Sun*  
by Paula McLain (Jane Hansen)

JANUARY 9: *Delayed Legacy*  
by Conrad Netting (Conrad Netting)

FEBRUARY 13: *The Last Days of Night*  
by Graham Moore (Bill Hensley)

MARCH 13: *The Hamilton Affair*  
by Elizabeth Cobb (Jane Hansen)

APRIL 10: *Commonwealth*  
by Ann Patchett (Jan Clayton)

MAY 8: *Hero of the Empire*  
by Candice Millard (Ron Baker)

HOLY LAND TOUR DEADLINE COMING UP!

Join Ron and Anne Scates, along with friends Jim Denison and Mike Fanning, as they lead a trip to the Holy Land in November. It will be an “In His Steps” tour of Israel that Mike and Jim are famous for. They are profound, great men of faith, with a tremendous sense of humor, and you will be thoroughly informed, encouraged, and blessed by their leadership. The dates of the trip are November 12-21, 2017.

See a full itinerary and sign up at:  
[www.mikefanning.com/ron-scates-israel-2017.html](http://www.mikefanning.com/ron-scates-israel-2017.html)

DEADLINE: AUGUST 12 • TRIP: NOVEMBER 12-21

BACK TO SCHOOL: KICK-OFF SUNDAY, AUGUST 27  
BY REV. DR. BOB FULLER

Summer is coming to a close and that means it’s time for a new season of learning and growth to begin. On August 27 at 9:30 AM, we will launch our 2017-2018 Sunday School/Christian Education year.

As a church, we spend a lot of time teaching and learning together. We teach in Sunday school, Wednesday night classes, Thursday morning studies, women’s circles, young adult gatherings, children’s programs, and small group Bible Study. We teach in Children’s Church. We teach in Youth meetings. We teach in Worship.

But why do we spend so much time teaching and learning together?

The book of Hebrews tells us “<sup>1</sup> Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.” These verses tell us something very important about God. They are telling us that God is knowable and wants to be known. For thousands of years, he has been revealing himself to people so that we could know Him.

We teach and we learn because God is real and wants to be known. Because He loves us so much, it is the deepest desire of his heart that we would get to know Him. So Paul says “<sup>17</sup> I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.”

Whatever your age, whatever your experience level, each one of us has been given the great invitation to “know [God] better.” FPC offers opportunities for all: Pre-K, Elementary, Middle School, Confirmation, High School, College, Young Adult and Adults.

Please accept the challenge and invitation to know God better. Join us for Kickoff Sunday, and be alert for information about specific classes and programs for you, your friends and your family. As always, bring a friend!



# HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP 2017

## HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SC

“This week taught us more about the missional heart of God and how deeply we are loved and treasured by the Creator. As a team we would like to say a giant THANK YOU to everyone who supported us through financial means and most importantly, prayer.”



Two summers in a row FPC’s high school students have spent a week on an island. Two islands drastically different—one is full of monetary wealth, prosperity and the appearance of joy; and the other one is full of materialistic despair, yet spiritually prosperous and overflowing with the true joy that comes from that.

Upon first glance Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, appears to be nothing but well-groomed lawns, giant houses and hotels, lush golf courses and perfect white sandy beaches. However, when you look closer you see there is another side to this island filled with people surviving one day at a time. No one and no place is as they seem, the gospel is for the rich and for the poor.

Each day our team was split into two smaller groups: one group spent their day volunteering at a children’s center and the other group spent their day at a day camp for students with disabilities (SOAR) held at the local school but sponsored by Special Olympics South Carolina. This group also helped landscape the church that graciously housed us as well as visited a nearby elderly home one morning.

Every work site was a learning experience, an opportunity to love others in Jesus’ name who do not regularly experience that love. The FPC students did not waste an opportunity to show others God’s love. Upon deliberation of one work day Annie Meadows said that, “in the end, I got to show these kids some of my love, but more importantly, some of God’s love.”

God was working among the team, bonding them together to then be sent out as a living testimony of true, pure Christian community. The deep friendships built in such

a short amount of time between our team and the SOAR students and the children’s center children is a reflection of that community and the efforts of the Holy Spirit. In reference to the children’s center Kate Maurer said, “I loved participating in various activities such as covering ourselves in shaving cream, playing tag in the park, and eating shaved ice. Many of these students came from difficult family situations, so it was quite fun to see simple things bring great joy to the kids. I felt so blessed to love on God’s children and see them express pure joy and excitement.”

In the evenings the team spent time prayer walking around the island, a time walking the streets of the island in deep prayer for those walking, biking, running or driving past you—for everyone the team encountered that day and for the island as a whole. Prayer walking is also a time to reflect on the ways God has used you and desires to use you to spread the kingdom of God in the upcoming days. Ellie Fuller said that prayer walking “gave us the opportunity to reflect upon all that we had experienced during the day and relate to God what we had learned, thereby allowing us to introspectively determine what He was calling us to do better in days to come. It was a time in which we were able to meditate over what we had learned and to talk to God about how we could make ourselves be more effective missionaries.”

This week taught us more about the missional heart of God and how deeply we are loved and treasured by the Creator. As a team we would like to say a giant THANK YOU to everyone who supported us through financial means and, most importantly, prayer. We experienced some of the fruit of your prayer and were blown away by it, but the true effects we will not know until we reach Heaven one day.



“After lunch we taught the children how to play ‘Go Fish.’ Although most of them didn’t understand how to play, it was still fun watching them laugh when they found a match. Today we were able to share and see God’s immeasurable and immense love for us by playing and laughing with the children at SOAR.”

—Harrison Stuart



# VBS BRINGS OUT THE HERO IN OVER 100 CHILDREN!



The children of FPC became Super Heroes during Vacation Bible School in June! In fact, they learned what it meant to be God's Super Heroes...created for a purpose to go into the world and share Christ with those they encounter.

Throughout the week of VBS, the kids learned stories from Scripture about God's people and how they trusted in God and let the Holy Spirit use them to do some amazing things! Each day, the kids learned a new Hero Code from our VBS Super Hero, Captain Shield, and his sidekick, Flame the Red Panda. They learned that God's Heroes have Heart, Courage, Wisdom, Hope, and Power!

The kids also enjoyed making super hero arm cuffs, shields, crosses, and pom pom shooters in our craft area. They gobbled up X-ray vision sticks (carrots and ranch dressing), Thor Hammers (cheese cubes on pretzel sticks), Catwoman Claws (bugles chips), and Kryp

to Krispies (green rice krispy treats), in snack. They learned what it means to serve others in our Missions rotation, and they created stained glass crosses, watercolor cards, crayon hearts, and flower pots for many of our mission partners around the city, including Mission Road, Christian Dental Clinic, and Morningside Ministries. The kids played games, sang songs, and even did some dancing—all while having a great week fellowshiping with new and old friends.

The Children's Ministry staff team would like to extend a HUGE Thank You to all of the volunteers, teen helpers, and parents who made this great week happen. Thank you to the congregation for praying for our kids, for visitors who have never been to church before, and for families who were impacted by VBS.

We are looking forward to a great Fall Kick-Off on August 27, and hope to see you all there!





# LOCAL MISSIONS

## SERVANT PARTNERS, EAST SAN ANTONIO



Where is God among the urban poor? Servant Partners (SP) was established in Los Angeles 25 years ago, with a desire to see God at work transforming the lives, families, homes, and systemic issues plaguing those in poverty in our cities worldwide. SP San Antonio is on the east side, a neighborhood identified as the most neglected in the city. Historically African-American, the population has changed over time to being predominantly Latino. The average household income is below the poverty line, and the need for Jesus to bring hope and a vision for change is desperate.

We have recently planted a bilingual church, La Luz en el Barrio (Light in the Neighborhood Church), to reach out to our community with the Love and Hope of Jesus. The church has pioneered a sports program that provides a free league for local youth to play soccer or basketball. We currently run four soccer teams and two basketball teams, reaching over 75 youth. Through this program we have met numerous families and are developing relationships that have led to many joining the local church. We also run many children and youth activities throughout the year, such as VBS and summer day trips. This fall, we will begin a mothers group to reach out to those mothers of young children who don't have many opportunities for outside community.

We are actively recruiting both volunteers and staff for our site. We are in need of volunteer soccer and basketball coaches. We also are looking for a worship leader and youth worker for the church. Please feel free to contact Mark Cloherty, site leader and pastor, if you are interested in volunteering or learning more about the work and opportunities with Servant Partners and La Luz en el Barrio church.

We are so thankful for the partnership of First Presbyterian Church and look forward to the coming years of ministry together for San Antonio!

Mark.Cloherty@servantpartners.org  
419-707-0850







I am honored to serve as the 2017-2018 President of Women of the Church, and to welcome all women of First Presbyterian Church to a new program year. I am also very privileged to have such dedicated officers serving with me who have been working to plan activities to meet the individual needs and interests for each of you to enjoy during the coming year. As our Women of the Church brochure states, “If you are a woman and a member of this church, you are a member of Women of the Church.” There are many and varied WOC activities available, including Bible study circles; literature circle, three sewing/white cross circles, shawl ministry, young mom’s group, care and concern and service circles; evening events for fellowship; luncheons; and other events for service and fellowship. Please see our 2017-2018 Calendar for dates and functions.

As we transition into the new year, I would like to recognize the outstanding leadership and the generous use of time and talents of President Linda Rittenhouse; WOC officers and chairmen; Bible moderators; and members in 2016-2017. Because of the generosity of the Women of the Church and contributions at the May Coffee, we were able to end the fiscal year with funds to donate to Young Lives, House of Neighborly Service, Presbyterian Children’s Home, FPC Children’s Choir, FPC Children’s Center, Dental Clinic, and Food for the Hungry.

June brought our outstanding Vacation Bible School for all children to enjoy. We give our sincere thanks to all of the Women of the Church who showed so much love and support for the children, teachers, and helpers. It truly takes a village to produce this outstanding program for our children. We especially thank Bunkie Shed and Service Circle



20 and other WOC members for the delicious snacks provided for the adult leaders and helpers.

In July, Circle members contributed school supplies for the children and young mothers in transition at the Presbyterian Children’s Home. These were greatly appreciated and will be distributed during the annual Back to School Barbecue in early August.

This year’s Bible study for circles is a continuation of the outstanding lessons prepared by Susan Kerr based on her book, *Intersections of Grace: Reflections on a Life of Faith*. We appreciate the many hours Susan has spent writing the in-depth Bible study lessons and thought provoking questions. We would also like to recognize June Eubank, Moderator Chairman, the dedicated women who present these lessons to their circles, and the circle chairmen who coordinate activities for growth, fellowship, and service. For more information about circles, please contact the Vice President of Circles, Barbara Dorsey at BGD101@msn.com.

As we look forward to the coming year and all that God has planned for each of us, please “Save the Date” for the Fall Ladies Night Out at the home of Catherine Whitsett, 203 Haskin Dr., on Thursday, October 5th from 6:00-7:30. All FPC women are encouraged to attend.

To live to make Jesus visible in our homes, community, and the world, may we be reminded of the nine attributes of the Christian life according to the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”.

Aug. 28	WOC Moderators and Council Meeting	9:45 AM Refreshments-Council/Moderators	10:00 AM Meetings
Oct. 2	WOC Moderators and Council Meeting	9:45 AM Refreshments-Council/Moderators	10:00 AM Meetings
Oct. 5		6:00 PM Fall Ladies Night Out	
Oct. 17		9:30 AM Christmas Craft Project	
Oct. 23		11:30 AM Fall Legacy Luncheon	
Nov. 6	WOC Moderators and Council Meeting	9:45 AM Refreshments-Council/Moderators	10:00 AM Meetings
Dec. 3		2:00-4:00 PM Advent Festival	
Dec. 4	WOC Moderators and Council Meeting	9:45 AM Refreshments-Council/Moderators	10:00 AM Meetings
Dec. 7		3:00 PM Morningside Christmas Party (Circles 6, 9, 11, 14)	
Dec. 14		3:00 PM Chandler Christmas Party (Circles 1/12, 7, 8, 20)	
Dec. 24		6:00-8:30 PM Christmas Eve Reception	
Jan. 8	WOC Moderators and Council Meeting	9:45 AM Refreshments-Council/Moderators	10:00 AM Meetings
Jan. 25		6:00 PM Winter Ladies Night Out	
Feb. 5	WOC Moderators and Council Meeting	9:45 AM Refreshments-Council/Moderators	10:00 AM Meetings
Mar. 5	WOC Moderators and Council Meeting	9:45 AM Refreshments-Council/Moderators	10:00 AM Meetings
Mar. 31		10:00 AM Children’s Easter Program	
Apr. 2	WOC Moderators and Council Meeting	9:45 AM Refreshments-Council/Moderators	10:00 AM Meetings
Apr. 9		11:30 AM Spring Luncheon	
May 7		10:30 AM WOC Moderators/Council Meeting	
		11:30 AM President’s Luncheon	
May 9		10:30-12:30 AM May Coffee	





# KEYS OLDER ADULTS

## BY JOE MOORE, DIRECTOR



The July Patriotic Picnic was a great time of fellowship for our whole church body. Thanks to KEYS and The Choir for keeping this event alive each year. We enjoyed the opportunity to serve at the SA Food Bank sorting food items at the warehouse. July Birthdays were celebrated at the Alamo Quarry Golf Club restaurant. This month we are looking forward to the Central Market Cooking School where we enjoy a great lunch as we watch it being prepared before us!!

Our birthday lunch in August is at the Hyatt Q-Kitchen, a favorite of all. Enjoy what is left of the summer and get ready for our KEYS Kick-Off on September 8th with San Antonio Native and American Idol Finalist Haley Scarnato.

### KEEP MOVING FITNESS

August Keep Moving Fitness Scheduled for the 4, 11, and 25, begins at 9:30 AM on the second floor of the Student Center.

### GAME DAYS

Game days are August 11 and 25 at 11:00 AM. Mah Jongg ends at 3:30 PM. Bridge ends when everyone decides to call it a day. Bring your lunch!

### BIRTHDAY LUNCH

August Birthday Lunch at The Hyatt Riverwalk Q-Kitchen Pasta Lunch and Salad Bar is on August 18 at 11:30 AM. There is limited parking so a Van Shuttle will begin from FPC at 10:45 AM.

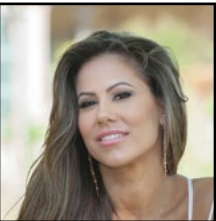
### AARP “WE NEED TO TALK” SEMINAR

AARP has developed a non-threatening approach to address a very sensitive and difficult question, “Do I need to turn in my Keys and stop driving?” The developers of the seminar hope to make this an easier topic to approach for both 55 and better parents and their adult children. Too often this decision is forced on a family due to a close call while driving or a full blown injury related accident. If you



would be interested in FPC hosting the “We Need To Talk” seminar, email or call Stephanie at 210-271-2753 or Stephanie@fpcsat.org.

### KEYS KICK-OFF WITH HALEY SCARNATO



On September 8, we will hear from Haley Scarnato, an American Idol Finalist. Haley began a performing career in her hometown of San Antonio, Texas, at the young age of 15 as the lead singer for a highly successful regional band, “The Oh So Good!” Even though Haley was raised on country music, she studied all styles of great singers including Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, Garth Brooks, Martina McBride, and Celine Dion (who Haley has had the opportunity of meeting). In 2007, the long-legged Texas singer was catapulted from a regional favorite to the international stage when she earned a spot in the Top 10 American Idol Season 6.

Haley is currently touring with Symphony Idol, performing with The Maryland Symphony, The Phoenix Symphony, The Winnipeg Symphony, and The Spokane Symphony, among many others. Living in Las Vegas, her country band has opened for many Country stars including Gary Alan and Aaron Tippin. She has sung the National Anthem for many International boxing events and NBA finals. Haley devotes a lot of her time to philanthropic endeavors—including her recent appearance as the Celebrity Ambassador for the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Texas—and loves every minute of it.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Lunch trip to Camp Verde General Store
- Holiday Lights Dinner on a River Barge served by Casa Rio
- Trip to the Boar’s Head and Yule Log Festival
- “Rain to Drain Tour” with SAWS

### TO JOIN US FOR ANY KEYS EVENT

Contact Stephanie at 210-271-2753/stephanieg@fpcsat.org.





## BEYOND THE STAINED GLASS | BY ALEX SOLORIO, UNIVERSITY/YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY ASSOCIATE



Have you ever watched a good movie and felt touched or moved by it? Maybe the words “I’m your huckleberry” or “to infinity and beyond!” set a moment when you were immersed in a film. Though those words came from Tombstone and Toy

Story, scripture has clear impactful moments that create such emotional responses that it is inevitable to feel moved and be reminded of how loving, gracious and merciful our King Jesus is.

In Luke, chapter 7:36-50, there is a woman that is at the end of her rope. She is broken, lost, and has nowhere else to turn. Those that she could have sought out to help her find repentance and restoration have judged her and refused to walk along side of her. Desperate, she takes an act of faith. As Jesus reclines at the table of a Pharisee, she takes an alabaster box of ointment and demonstrates her desire to change her life, knowing she is at the feet of the only One who can.

First, she shows this with her posture—on her knees. When was the last time you were on your knees before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? I pray we become a congregation that does not settle for smooth knees. She gives honor to the One that deserves it most.

Second, she shows this with the gift—an alabaster box of sweet perfume ointment. She takes all that she has left and anoints the feet of Jesus. What have you set before the feet of Jesus? Career? Family? Relationships? Goals? Spouse? There is a moment in our own lives when we are reminded that we have been set free from our sin and our punishment, and yet we hoard our possessions like they weren’t God’s in the first place. I pray we continue to be a congregation that continues to submit petitions and prayers at the feet of the King—our Lord and Savior Jesus.

Finally, she shows this with the application—her Identity. For a woman in that context, and even a woman now, hair is valuable in identity. For a woman to be on her knees, using expensive oil—and with her tears, wiping the feet of Jesus—one must be moved. She has taken all and set herself at the feet of Jesus. Is our Faith our identity or has it become our accessory? When

people see you do they know you are a follower of Jesus Christ with not only your living actions but your gracious truth-filled words? I pray we become a congregation where our Identity is set before the feet of the Savior, and pure lives become a reflection of that.

This account of this woman’s faith is moving, and I pray it challenges you, as scripture usually does, to be a better disciple of the Lord.

Let us venture beyond the stained glass of our windows, and dare to be faithful just as this woman was. Not just in word but in action.

—Grace and Peace.

## MOMENTS TO HOLD CLOSE | WEEDING YOUR GARDEN | BY MANNY RODRIGUEZ



This summer Stacie and I have pledged to work diligently to keep our five acres and subsequent garden looking nice, which is no easy task. Historically I have been prone to allowing the mowing and weed eating to slip from one day, to the

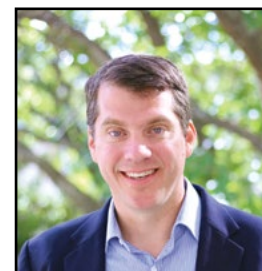
next, to a week as it continues to get out of control. Once I finally take on the task, it seems insurmountable, but this year, we have vowed to stay on top of it. And you know what? Staying in a routine makes the task much easier, the yard looking nicer, and makes us both feel much better.

However, weeds are a constant nuisance. They grow rapidly, suck away nutrients from desirable plants and—no matter how nice the yard or garden looks—if a few weeds exist it makes the entire area look awful. It is very easy to simply pull the tops of the weeds

out, throw them away and for a few days it looks nice—only to have them reappear. But that is merely cosmetic, for the damage they are doing underneath the soil persists, and the root system only gets stronger wreaking havoc for the rest of the garden. The answer is to take the time to remove them from their roots and actually get rid of them for good instead of merely tending to the surface.

The same is true with spiritual weeds that prevent you from having a healthy garden with your Heavenly Father. We have to remove the sins in our lives from the source, not merely the surface, so that our spiritual nutrients are not being zapped by unhealthy acts. If we merely hide our sins from the surface, the true damage is being done in a far more harmful fashion and, in time, the weeds can take over. I encourage you to take the time to remove these weeds from the source, and you too will find, as I have, that it is far easier to tend to your garden.

## WELCOME NEW STAFF | REV. A. MITCHELL MOORE, ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR YOUNG ADULTS



Please join us in welcoming Rev. A. Mitchell Moore to the First Pres pastoral staff as Associate Pastor for Young Adults.

Mitchell brings a nearly 20-year career, having just served in Jakarta, Indonesia, with an Indonesian

foundation that focuses on education and health care. His roles in Indonesia included spiritual oversight and development for the university system as Chaplain, Senior Executive Leadership, and Church planting.

Mitchell served as Assistant Pastor for Young Adults at Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis, TN, for five years and has been involved throughout his career in church mission activity through domestic

and international partnerships. You may remember Mitchell as our Director of Youth Ministry right here at First Pres, 13 years ago! He graduated with an M.Div. from Covenant Theological Seminary in 2008.

Mitchell is passionate about advancing the Kingdom of Christ and is a gifted, expositional preacher who is urgent about mission, discipleship, and shepherding God’s people to flourish under the authority and power of God’s word.

He and his wife, Lisa, have four children: Lauren, Cora, Tucker, and Ben. The entire Moore family is excited to be re-connected with our FPC family!









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