



February 2022

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Pastor's Article



Did You Learn Something New?

Rev. Dr. Bob Fuller
Senior Pastor

As a congregation, we spent an entire year (2021) learning and celebrating the history of First Presbyterian Church. We learned through newsletter articles, sermons, Sunday school classes, special publications, special speakers, events, and numerous informal conversations. We gave the time and set aside the energy to learn about the important events and faithful people who founded and guided this church.

One of the reasons for this year-long celebration was to connect both newcomers and long-time members with our heritage and our Savior in a deeper way. We wanted everyone to know this church better and love her more.

The Bible makes the case that knowledge and love are deeply connected. The better we know something or someone, the more we can love it (or them); and, the more we love someone, the more we want to know that person.

Beginning on February 1st, our nation and community will once again observe Black History Month. The first observance of Black history month took place at Kent State University in January, 1970. Six years later, Black History Month was being celebrated all across the country in educational institutions, centers of Black culture and communities. President Gerald Ford recognized Black History Month in 1976, during the celebration of the United States Bicentennial. He urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." (Wikipedia)

I was inspired to write about Black history month for several reasons.

On the one hand, our earliest church records indicate that African-Americans were active in the First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio from the very beginning.



Session records indicate that there were 11 "colored communicants" in the church in 1856. We have record of Louise Vance, Amanda Richie, Pauline Castle, Amanda Jane Brown, Phoebe Rutledge, Mary Matthews, and William Matthews. We even know that there were black members who were ordained and installed as elders. The first three were William Reed, Charles Richie, Bedford Lytle.

On the other hand, we know very little about these disciples. Beyond the first generation, we are not certain of their names or legal status (slave or free). We also know that the congregation was segregated by 1860. It is unclear whether this segregation was imposed because of race, or space limitations of the original "old Adobe" building.

The men and women listed here are part of our history. Not just "black history," but the history of our First Presbyterian Church. We know a great deal about our Pastors, white elders, and white members, but what about these others?

I did not use the word "others" casually or by mistake. I used it because within the context of FPC history, the disciples listed represent a small, almost forgotten minority of our membership and leadership. They are the "other" Presbyterians who were

laboring right beside the more well known and prominent disciples of our story.

Recently, David Rogers gave me a book by Arthur Brooks titled, *Love Your Enemies*. It is a book addressing the root causes and hopeful answers to America's deep social and cultural divisions. In the book, the author wrote:

In his *Summa Theologica*, Saint Thomas Aquinas said, "To love is to will the good of the other." The modern philosopher Michael Novak refines this further by adding two words: "To love is to will the good of the other as other."

If you are a white Presbyterian, or not African American, the point of Black History Month is not to learn a separate history, or someone else's history but to appreciate people within our common history. It is to love the other in their distinction, not trying to erase the distinction or ignore it, but to appreciate it.

Jesus said, "you shall love your neighbor as you love yourself." (Matthew 22:39). At First Presbyterian we cannot love ourselves without or Love the City, the nations or our neighbors without learning about and celebrating all of the saints who built and carried this church.

As I approach Black History Month this year, I want to do so by remembering that it is not about politics but about learning to love and to love more as we learn more.

Black history is a reminder to pay attention to the "other" stories of our history—to seek out the stories and learn the lessons of those African American members and leaders who Loved Christ, Loved one another and Loved the City.

Grace and Peace,

FIRST PRESS - FEBRUARY 2022

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First Press is published monthly by the First Presbyterian Church San Antonio Communications Team.

Want to be featured in FIRST PRESS?

Deadline to submit content: the 15th of the previous month.

Hank Cherry: **Director of Communications**

Abigail Ensley: **Graphic Designer**

Ross Brown: **Media Coordinator**

Questions? Contact: Hank Cherry (210-271-2728/hankc@fpcsat.org)

Save the Date

DISCOVER, KNOW, JOINFPC!

Interested in learning more about FPC San Antonio or joining us as a Covenant Partner? Sign up for the Discover, Know, JoinFPC! Spring program begins Sunday, March 20. For more information or to register: <https://fpcsanantonio.org/how-to-join/>

WINTER 2022 MINISTRY GUIDE

Now updated for winter! Check out all of our Sunday school classes, Bible Studies, programs and many more ways to get connected at FPC. We look forward to seeing you this winter at FPC! Visit fpcsanantonio.org/winter2022 to view or download the Winter 2022 Ministry Guide.

PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

BOLD AND COURAGEOUS: JOSHUA AND THE NEXT GENERATION

Wednesdays | 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM | Covenant Hall

Thursdays | 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM | Covenant Hall or Livestream via www.fpcsanantonio.org

After decades in the Wilderness, God fulfilled his covenant and sent the people into the land He had promised. But, it was not easy. There was work to do and they were opposed at every turn. The people learned that following the way of the Lord is always a challenge. So the Lord gave them a new leader to guide them and charged Him to be bold and courageous as they moved into their new home. This Winter the Pastor's Bible Study (PBS), led by Dr. Bob Fuller, will grapple with and join Joshua and the people of Israel as they move into the promised land and fight for their physical and spiritual survival. Contact: Lellen Lane: lellenlane@aol.com, (210) 860-1395 (to be placed in small groups for discussion following the general session)

DIVORCECARE

Wednesdays | January 5 – March 30 | 6:00 PM

DivorceCare is a video seminar series featuring some of the nation's foremost Christian experts on divorce and recovery topics as seen from a biblical perspective. The video seminars are combined with support group discussions of the materials presented during

the video. Contact Butch Gerfers at 210-862-9998 or gerfers@flash.net. For more info: divorcecare.org/about or divorcecare.org/groups/142471

LITERATURE CIRCLE

Tuesday, February 8 | 1:00 PM | Westminster Hall

The FPC Literature Circle will meet in Westminster Hall for a presentation of the book, *A Stranger Among Saints: Stephen Hopkins, The Man Who Survived Jamestown & Saved Plymouth*, by author Jonathan Mack, and presented by Hank Cherry. Men and women of all faiths are invited. The social half-hour begins at 1:00 PM followed by the review at 1:30 PM. For more information please visit fpcsanantonio.org/literature-circle

PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

Friday, February 11 | 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

(drop-off starts at 5:45 pm) | Assembly Room

Children ages 0-5th grade are welcome to join us for this fun evening! \$5.00 per Child Drop off your kids at FPC for some fun! We will provide popcorn and a movie. Please pack your child's dinner and send them in their PJs! They can also bring their blankets and pillows! Children must be picked up no later than 8:00 pm.

7-11 YOUTH GATHERING

Friday, February 11 | 7:00-11:00 PM | Student Center

Come join us on Friday, February 11 from 7:00-11:00 PM for our first 7-11 of 2022! All students and friends in grades 6-12 are invited to participate. Food, games, and fun will be available! Contact Alex Clary at alexc@fpcsat.org or Kerri Napoli at kerrin@fpcsat.org for more information.

2021-2022 NEW COVENANT PARTNERS!

Sunday, February 20 | 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Please join us for a casual evening of fellowship at the home of Don Test. Drop by for light bites, drinks, and time to connect with others who are new to FPC as well as with members of the Connections Com-

mittee, FPC Pastors and Staff. Contact Daniella Couch at daniellem.couch@gmail.com to RSVP and more information.

WOMEN'S FAITH GATHERING

Sunday, February 20, 2022 | 6:00 PM-8:00 PM

Join other FPC women for an evening of fellowship and sharing. We will hear testimonies of God's faithfulness in the faith stories of Sidney Wilkins and Jennie Brooks. This Faith Gathering will be held at the home of Janet Hornberger (805 College Boulevard, 78209). For more information, contact Judy Kruger (judykruger@sbcglobal.net, 210-857-0122) or Marti Seal (mseal3385@gmail.com).

YOUNG FAMILIES GOSPEL COMMUNITY GROUP

Beginning Sunday, February 27 | 12:15 PM - 2:00 PM | Geneva Room

Join other families with young kids for fellowship, Bible Study, and prayer! We will be studying Grace-Filled Parenting by Paul David Tripp. Feel free to order a copy of the book ahead of time, or we'll give you a copy (with a donation) when you come! Hope you can join us! Child-care and lunch (for parents) will be provided. Please pack a lunch for your children. Contact: Briana Damrow at brianadamrow@gmail.com for more info.

MEN'S MINISTRY QUARTERLY DINNER

Sunday, February 27 | 5:30 PM | Chris Madrid's

More information to come. Contact Richard Peacock at richard@dinewithduo.com, (210) 824-0511.

A CHRISTIAN PARENTING ENRICHMENT SEMINAR

Friday, March 25, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Saturday, March 26, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM | FPC San Antonio

Dr. Chap Clark has been invited to come and engage our parents and offer encouragement for our parents on how to disciple their kids from home in order to live Christlike in a secular world. Additionally, special guests who make up various expert categories, such as Pediatrics, Family Counseling, and School Administrators will be present to give their analysis of the impact kids are facing today. The two-day conference will also include testimony from parents on important parenting topics. Contact Rozlyn Miller at rozlynm@fpcsat.org for more information.



ISRAEL 2022

In November of 2022, Join Bob and Morgan Fuller on a pilgrimage of faith and adventure to Israel. The trip will be led by Dr. Mike Fanning. Those who have travelled with Mike know about his passion and expertise for introducing men and women of faith to the places where God met, challenged and blessed his people.

The group will leave San Antonio on November 7, 2022, and return on November 16, 2022. If you are interested, please check out the Detailed trip and registration information available through MBF Enterprises Inc (mikefanning.com).

Fpc Presents

A Christian Parenting Enrichment Seminar

FRIDAY, MARCH 25 - 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

SATURDAY, MARCH 26 - 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

(COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH PROVIDED ON SATURDAY)



Dr. Chap Clark

Dr. Chap Clark is a pastor, author, professor, and speaker committed to training and equipping parents and churches on the developmental and spiritual needs of children and adolescents. Dr. Clark will share with FPC parents and grandparents of children and youth by offering encouragement and tools for discipling their children to live like Christ in a secular world.

This exciting two day seminar will also include special guests who make up various expert categories, such as, Pediatrics, Family Counseling, and School Administration. These guests will give their analysis of what our kids and youth are facing today. Additionally, you will hear testimonies from parents in our community!

If you have a child, grandchild, or teen of any age, you do not want to miss this opportunity! All are welcome and we hope you will invite your friends, neighbors, and family members to participate.

Childcare is free for all children 5th grade and under.

Free Community & Church Event!

REGISTER NOW AT [FPCSANANTONIO.ORG/MARYSCHILDREN](https://fpcsanantonio.org/maryschildren)

PLEASE CONTACT ROZLYN MILLER FOR ANY QUESTIONS AT
rozlynm@fpcsat.org

2021 was a year about investing in relationship.

As the nation began to emerge from the lockdowns of the Covid Pandemic, we celebrated being able to meet in community again. We gave thanks as we were able to return to gathering together to worship and enjoy fellowship. While we enjoyed reconnecting with treasured friends, we also rejoiced over the opportunity to build new relationships. Much the same rings true for FPC Missions over the last year. While we discovered new ways to connect with our mission partners through Covid, we are joyful for the opportunities the Lord provided to grow in relationship as we all served to advance God's mission for His Kingdom in San Antonio and around the world.

One pivotal way we began to invest in our Missions Partnerships has been through the work of our FPC Mission Champions. These champions lead a team of Champions within our FPC Family, helping us all to connect in relationship with our ministry partners locally and globally. These champions work to care for and encourage our ministry partners as they communicate regularly, and they serve to educate, equip, and empower our church family to connect and serve.



PRAYER

We have enjoyed continuing to connect with our FPC Ministry Partners in prayer. The 9:38 Missions Prayer Text Line has encouraged regular rhythms of prayer with for our Local and Global Mission Partners, our city, and the global Church. Please contact lindsays@fpcsat.org to begin receiving these prayer text updates each week.

We also enjoyed praying with and for our ministry partners in quarterly Virtual Prayer Room opportunities. These were powerful times of prayer in the Holy Spirit together, with ministry partners joining our FPC Family from around the city and around the globe! Please download our most recent prayer guides for [Local](#) and [Global](#) Missions.

2021 MISSIONS REPORT



Children's and Youth Ministries

Our FPC Children and Youth were able to connect with our ministry partners in some great ways through 2021! Last June, as children attended VBS, they were able to see several of our ministry partners on videos recorded specially for them. They learned about what God was doing in our city and around the world through these ministry partners as they were encouraged to begin thinking about the special gifts and talents the Lord gave them to bring the gospel to others. Additionally, our children and youth were cared for our Global Mission Partners as they sent Christmas cards filled with encouragement and thanks.

LOCAL MISSIONS

The Lord has continued to move through our Local Mission Partners toward the restoration of lives in our neighborhoods. He has opened doors for new partnerships as well as created new opportunities to deepen and expand existing ministry relationships in San Antonio.

Kingdom Restoration Lab

The Lord has blessed the KRL with opportunities to grow in ways to serve our neighbors. Ministries like the SA Hope Center and Any Woman Can have been able to expand their hours, while SA Hope Center has added several staff to increase our neighbors' access to resources. Additionally, the KRL is thankful to have added Life Restored San Antonio and One by One Ministries as partners in the KRL. Life Restored serves trafficked youth and their families, working to restore hope and purpose to their lives. One by One is working

to connect with expectant and new mothers to provide mentoring through pregnancy and the first year of a baby's life. There is so much to be thankful for as we see increased collaboration and stories of restoration through these partnerships. Through 2021, the KRL served a total of 4,397 clients with 1,989 of them visiting for the first time. Here are some of the incredible ways God has worked through the KRL in 2021:

Life Restored Story

Meet Beverly, a charming, beautiful 17-year-old who appears to have it all together. Her makeup is on point and her dragon nails sparkle. But it is what we don't see that is important. The hurt and pain of the abuse she's suffered from sex trafficking...the evidence of her need for Life Restored SA... the need for ongoing trauma counseling through STICH Ministries...the need to be tested and treated at Any Woman Can. There is one thing that I really NEED you to see....that none of Beverly's needs would be met had it not been for YOU. You make the KRL possible, you make ministry happen.

Carolyn Thomas—Director, Life Restored SA



Any Woman Can

In the fall of 2021 a caseworker was helping a young lady to obtain housing and to continue her education. During one of her mentoring sessions she mentioned that she might be pregnant so she was referred to Any Woman Can. They confirmed that she was pregnant and immediately began counseling her. One by One Ministry also stepped up and will provide support and mentoring through the first year of the baby's life. Each of these ministries came together with the help of the Women of the Church to have a baby shower for the new mom and dad; and today, they have a healthy baby girl named Faith!

Welcome Home Baskets and Housing grants

Last year, the SA Hope Center received a grant to help with providing housing for our neighbors in the KRL. As KRL clients worked with a mentor from the SA Hope Center and began to get housing, FPC started the Welcome Home Basket Project to provide much needed items to welcome them home. Our FPC Family donated items to fill these baskets from towels, to cleaning products, to kitchen ware, to bedding! We look forward to continuing to walk alongside our neighbors as the Lord does a transforming work in their lives!



SA Hope

The SA Hope Center in the KRL continued to grow and develop ways to help our neighbors transform their lives throughout 2021. From ID recovery, to equipping our neighbors with financial health or for new jobs, to housing, and much more, the SA Hope Mentors connect our neighbors with important resources every day. One new way they did this in 2021 was through hosting a job fair in the KRL. There was a great turnout, and one person was even hired on the spot!

What a blessing to see lives transformed as staff and volunteers in the KRL take the time to hear stories, listen to dreams, and give hope and encouragement to our neighbors. We celebrate many different stories throughout 2021, including the story of Mr. K. Mr. K was a professional with his own computer business. When COVID hit, he was hit hard financially. In addition, a difficult relationship with

his business partner and family caused him to walk out of the life he had built. Mr. K made his way from Houston to San Antonio and decided to start over. He went to the KRL looking for a way to acquire identification documents. Since he did not have an ID, he was unable to stay at any shelter or rent a motel. Mr. K worked really hard to obtain all of his documents and a few months later, was able to obtain his ID. This is not an easy task to do when homeless. After obtaining his ID, he quickly got a job with Centro and is now saving money for an apartment. Now, armed with new hope, Mr. K is serving alongside organizations like SA Hope to help end homelessness in our city.



YoungLives care package story

In April 2021, YoungLives San Antonio volunteered in the KRL at FPC to pack care bags for our homeless neighbors. While packing bags, one young mother saw a memory on her phone; an image from her previous visit to the KRL. The picture was of the ultrasound she had taken down the hall in the Any Woman Can clinic one year earlier prior to the day. Exactly one year before, the pregnant teenager had come into the KRL questioning whether or not to abort her unborn child. After seeing the love and strength of mentoring, community, and relationships within YoungLives, the young girl decided to keep her baby and celebrated with her community a year later! It is an incredible picture of God's redemptive work through the opportunity to collaborate; optimizing the impact for care of our neighbors and neighborhood!

2021 MISSIONS REPORT

Furthermore, we are grateful that FPC Volunteers have been able to return to serve as hosts in the KRL Reception area. These volunteers serve as a welcoming presence as they share in prayer and encouragement for our neighbors.

In addition to the ministries serving in the KRL, we have seen collaboration in our neighborhood grow. Partnerships with CAM, First Baptist Church, CUB, and Corazon Ministries' Day Center have allowed for more opportunities to connect with our neighbors and increase the access they have to important resources.

A great new way our FPC Family is invited to use their gifts and talents in service is at Mission Road. One Sunday a month, folks from FPC have been going to Mission Road to lead a chapel service. Volunteers have used a variety of gifts, from organizing, to teaching, to music and acting, helping our friends at Mission Road learn more about the good news of Jesus. We look forward to continuing to serve with Mission Road through these chapel services in 2022. If you would like to learn more about serving with Mission Road, please contact Jacob Gray (jacobgray67@gmail.com).



Local Missions Encouragement Project

As the teams of our Local Mission Partners worked faithfully through the challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic, FPC served to care for them with prayer and encouragement, offering God's grace and love. Our FPC Family hand-wrote over 800 cards which were given to the staff teams of our Local Mission Partners, who shared their thanks as they were blessed by the notes they received.

Loving our Schools

School professionals have experienced a multitude of challenges through the pandemic over the last two years. The Lord opened doors for FPC to care for the full staff teams of three schools; IDEA Ewing Halsell, Washington Elementary, and the FPC Children's Center. Our FPC Family donated items to fill 140 care packages during Love Our Teachers month in October, and again shared encouragement with notes and sweet treats in November.

Foster and Adopt

The Covid Pandemic has increased the foster crisis in our city. As fewer foster families were able to provide a nurturing home for children, the number of children needing homes has grown. In partnership with the South Texas Alliance for Orphans, FPC has been praying for more foster families in our church and in the city as we have helped to care for families who are fostering.

2021 was an exciting year for the L.O.V.E. Initiative at FPC. We started the year with over \$1,000 of donations given by the Young Adults' ministry during their 2020 Christmas party. God used these monetary gifts to support our FPC foster family in many ways throughout the year: meals, a yearlong DoSeum membership, 2 sets of duffle bags for their foster children (their first real suitcases), books, a complete Amazon wish list of toys and baby essentials for a newborn, and a date night out for the two of them when their children were appointed back to the biological family.



We had the joy of participating in another year of Kinmart in the fall, supporting grandparents and kin raising children with school supplies through a fun and free “shopping” experience at our church. Many from our FPC Family provided donations of school supplies while volunteers served at FPC to help more than 50 Kinship Families (over 150 children) in our city “shop” for the school supplies they needed in the fall. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with and serve these families in our community.

The South Texas Alliance for Orphans (STAFO) helped set up our church to use Care Portal, an amazing ministry tool that we are excited to ramp up in a big way in 2022. This tool connects at-risk families with nearby churches to support them with supplies and connect them to ministries. This provides us with more opportunities to help prevent children from being placed in foster care, lead more families to know Jesus, and invite these families into our church.



Christmas Encouragement Projects

Over the last two years, our ministry partners have seen many challenges stemming from the effects of the Covid pandemic. They have been diligent in discerning God’s will for their ongoing ministry in our city as they have navigated increased crises in homelessness, mental illness, foster and adoption, marriages, and more. They have been faithful in continuing to serve with excellence, trusting the Lord to provide and empower amid the challenges and changes so many have faced.

This year, our FPC Family was able to come alongside our FPC Ministry Partners to provide encouragement and care in

a new way. Through the FPC Local Missions Encouragement Project, our Local Mission Champions discerned ways to share our deep gratitude for these ministry partners. Opportunities to serve these teams ranged from gift cards, to handwritten encouragement notes from our FPC Family and delicious cookies, to sharing in meals and fellowship. Our FPC Family was able to come together to serve the staff of over 20 ministries and over 700 people in our city!

GLOBAL MISSIONS

We have enjoyed continuing to connect with our Global Mission Partners through avenues like Zoom, email, and Whatsapp. However, 2021 also welcomed in opportunities to meet in fellowship and service with our Global Mission Partners. From visits to San Antonio to a return to overseas short term mission trips, FPC enjoyed reconnecting with our Global Mission Partners in person once again. We have also seen collaborative ministry advance through our global partnership as relationships have grown.

Missionary Visits

FPC has been blessed to partner in ministry with incredible and faithful men and women around the globe. While we often look for opportunities to serve them, many times we find ourselves blessed by them as we learn from them and see a larger picture of God’s faithfulness among the nations. From the beauty of different cultures worshipping to stories of faithfulness that encourage us in our own walks, we are able to grow as we explore the opportunity for reciprocity in mission partnership. In 2021, we were able to welcome several Global Mission Partners to San Antonio:



2021 MISSIONS REPORT

The Delfils Family, from Haiti, visited in February to share information and updates about their ministry. Though Haiti has notably experienced many ongoing crises, from natural disasters to political upheaval, FPC was encouraged to hear testimony from the Delfils Family about God's faithfulness as they continue to trust Him in their lives and ministry. Furthermore, the Young Adult Communities were challenged and encouraged as Pastor Delfils encouraged them to stay grounded in the Word, faithful in prayer, and obedient to God's will for their lives, especially through the most difficult challenges in their lives.

A long-time FPC Ministry Partner serving in the N.E. Mediterranean Region visited FPC to share in fellowship and to share about all the Lord is doing there. During a special teaching lunch, our FPC Family was encouraged and challenged to consider how relational evangelism and discipleship could help them as they consider what mission looks like in their workplaces.



As we celebrated 175 years and considered their original mission heritage to Mexico, FPC hosted two weekends to celebrate our partnerships in "Mission South." Pastors Josias Luna (Oaxaca, Mexico) and Hector Reynoso (Mercedes, Texas) both preached at worship services, sharing about the work that those who love Jesus continue to do in ways and places that we might not normally consider. Both Josias and Hector gave us windows into a worship service, fellowship, and disciple building that is beautiful, inspiring and humbling in its simplicity, dedication, perseverance, and true love for one another and the Lord.



The Yucatan

FPC celebrates all the Lord is doing through ministry partnership in the Yucatan! After 2 years of labor and love, even through the complications of the pandemic, a clean water installation project was completed, and the first bottle of clean water was filled in March! In addition, several FPC Covenant Partners were able to join YPM at the first graduation ceremony at the YPM Institute.



One of the difficulties of the Covid Pandemic was the halting of travel. After nearly two years, FPC was able to send a team of 12 people to serve alongside YPM in July! The Team participated in painting projects and sports ministry. The trip was a blessing as FPC continues to build relationships in the Yucatan, and for the team that was able to see and experience all that the Lord is doing through this partnership.



Growing Leaders Globally

As the Global Church continues to grow, there are many young emerging leaders and pastors who do not have access to important training to equip them with sound theological doctrine, and the tools they need to be fruitful in ministry for the next generation. FPC is thrilled to be partnering with seminaries in Mexico and Poland to provide scholarships to over 10 students with growing vision to use their gifts for ministry in their local context.

The Mission South Champion Team of the Global Missions Committee has developed a network with the leadership of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (INPM) and a few seminaries. The Biblicus Mexico Scholarship program is a central focus and reason for these relationships. Currently, First Presbyterian, through this program is providing seven students with support in their education for ministry.

Each student has a mentor, from Mexico, and a prayer partner, from our church. Three students are studying in the United States: Raquel Cahuich, of Mérida, - online MA. Special Education at Calvin University; María José Navarro two year theology degree at the Río Grande Bible Institute in Edinburg, Texas; and Alejandro González - MA Theology at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, MI. The other four students are studying at Presbyterian Seminaries in México. Aarón Noh is in his final year of study at San Pablo Seminary in Mérida; he is currently planting a new church. Toribio Reyes and Isela Oramas are in their final year at The Sureste Seminary in Villahermosa, Tabasco; Toribio's thesis discusses how to share the gospel with person of Islamic faith. Isela's thesis is about Christian counseling and what parts of secular counseling might be helpful to include. Yazmín Santiago is studying at the National Presbyterian



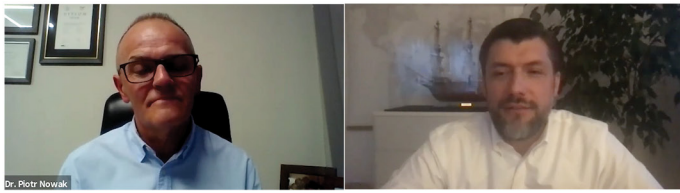
Seminary in Mexico City; she has a heart for youth ministry and is a graphic designer with a Facebook Page "Un Talento" for sharing teaching materials. We plan to bring these students to San Antonio in August of 2022 so that church members may meet and share life with them!

With a growing desire to see the next generation of leadership equipped with Reformed Theological training in Poland, the Lord opened some incredible and unlikely doors for partnership from 2020-2021. FPC began working with the Tolle Lege Institute and the College of Theology and Social Sciences, a traditionally Pentecostal school, to develop an opportunity to provide Reformed Theology Teaching at the school. Through 2021, Tolle Lege was blessed to be able to move their book store onto the College Campus as Pastor



Dariusz (Tolle Lege) was invited to teach and now oversee the International Program at the college. With FPC's support, students from around the world are receiving scholarships to study in the International Program at WSTS and are growing in vision for ministry through their studies.

- Native English speakers enjoy access to a seemingly endless supply of study materials to grow in our understanding of God's Word. This same availability does not apply to other languages. FPC partners with several ministries who are doing the important work of translation to enable people to read Scripture in their own language for the first time, or theological and study resources. Through FPC Global Missions Partnerships resources have been translated and published into the Persian Language and Polish, and work to translate the Bible into the Nuaulu Language has continued. Furthermore, FPC provided 25 Spanish Language Study Bibles to RAM Ministries to help equip pastors in Mexico and along the border. These pastors were blessed by the gift as they studied the Word.



Learning on Mission

FPC Missions launched a new opportunity to learn from our FPC ministry partners as we are equipped and empowered to serve locally and globally. Two podcasts are currently available on our website, covering topics to help us begin to understand Islam and how to build relationships with our Muslim neighbors while pointing to the truth of Christ, and to help us learn more about the Person and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and throughout the global Church. We look forward to more conversations with our ministry partners in 2022! We thank God for the opportunity for our FPC family to participate in God's mission in the neighborhoods of our city and among the nations of the world. The fruitfulness of FPC mission committees during our 175th year celebration honors our heritage and fuels our hope. We are humbled by how God's grace has transformed the troubles of 2021 into kingdom treasure as our FPC family re-discovered the richness of God's upside-down promise, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) We thank God for the richness of His gospel promises discovered through participation in His work of redemptive restoration.

The COVID shut downs did not shut our participation in God's work of redemptive restoration. Our FPC mission leaders solidified our mission ministry model, increased prayer, and deepened ministry partner relationship through development and deploying champion ministry teams. Last year we welcomed ministry partners from Haiti and Mexico, sent covenant partners to Poland and Mexico, deepened collaboration in our neighborhood, and set the pace in San Antonio through strategic response to casualties cascading from the COVID 19 crisis.

We rejoice in the reality that during a time of social crisis our FPC family increased corporate prayer and participation with partners and monetary support for their ministries. The leadership and service of our ministry partner champions compelled our congregation toward a more rich and authentic engagement of God's mission of redemptive restoration in our neighborhoods and among the nations. Thanks be to the name of Jesus- To Him be the glory.



REDEEMING THE CRISIS TASK FORCE- CELEBRATION & FINAL REPORT

A team of elders put together on April 22, 2020, prioritized the following goals: *discerning* the greatest needs for our church and city from the casualties of COVID-19, *discovering* where God is working, and *developing* a proposal towards faithful participation in God's work of redeeming the COVID-19 crisis. The FPC Redeeming the Crisis (RTC) task force was commissioned by the FPC Session to accomplish these goals. Since it was established, the RTC has worked to empower individuals and families in our congregation and city who are afflicted by the casualties cascading from the COVID-19 health crisis. **What follows is a very brief celebration of our successes and a final report handing back the reins for this vital work to the Session to oversee going forward.**

Much to celebrate:

Spiritual gifts survey — The spiritual gifts survey created by the RTC has been incorporated into the fabric of the church through the new covenant partner process, providing a database for deployment of our covenant partners in mission to our congregation, the city and the world.

Children and families — There were multiple initiatives attempting to minister to this most vulnerable group but the most significant were:

- *Citywide family initiative:* The RTC hosted forums and encouraged and supported the birth and growth of a new citywide family ministry "Together for San Antonio (T4SA)" that has reached a significant number of churches encouraging focus and care to the family during these difficult times.
- *Foster care:* The combination of the pandemic and state related legal issues has created seismic changes and difficulties in this area that are still largely hidden from the general public. The RTC worked in multiple areas in this space, especially trying to bring some healing to the trauma that is now surfacing with these children.

51 church leaders, including many lead pastors, representing 27 local churches, were exposed to the crisis and provided a strategy to mobilize their church to engage the crisis. Early in 2022 the momentum will continue with a gathering of Hispanic church leaders of primarily Spanish speaking congregations to make them aware of the crisis and ways they can support families in their church and the children in the foster care system.

- *Marriage:* Within our congregation, the RTC encouraged the long overdue establishment of a vital marriage ministry within our church, which the Micklers' have taken on and carried forward. This development is long overdue and will be a huge blessing to our congregation.

Mental Health — Aside from the foster care crisis, the mental health arena has been and will be the area with the most long-lasting effects from this pandemic, both within our congregation and throughout our city.

- A mental health team was birthed within our FPC family, led by Jen Borges. The team desires to love our congregation and community well through the gift of presence during a mental health crisis or ongoing care.

FPC's Mental Health Team felt called to serve as an extension of pastoral care and received training and direction from Bridges to Care, SA, and Hope and Healing Center & Institute (HHCI) in Houston. Pastors will receive training in identifying a potential mental health concern and refer that person to the team. The team would then attempt to establish relationships with those in need of care: offer companionship through ReImagine workbooks, direct them to applicable services with a vetted referral list, and when needed, potentially help with the cost of crisis care.

2021 MISSIONS REPORT

- Through the RTC, STCH ministry has partnered with FPC, providing Christian-based counseling for our congregation on a donation only basis (There is a five week wait, demonstrating the demand).
- Both of these congregational ministries will now be given a specific “home” within the organizational structure of our church and supported on an ongoing basis by the Session.
- Citywide, the RTC worked in multiple spaces to try to respond to this particular crisis, most importantly by hosting a mental health seminar with Dr. Matthew Stafford of the Hope and Healing Center & Institute in Houston, TX, that reached a large number of church leaders, and by supporting Chosen Care in their ministry to help children caught in the child welfare system heal from trauma by strengthening their families.

Neighbors and neighborhood —The RTC’s work in this area has primarily been accomplished through the KRL. While the KRL had to shut down for a period during the pandemic it soon reopened as the physical door to our neighborhood and our various partners there have functioned beautifully under very difficult circumstances. Reviewing the KRL’s work would be a whole separate presentation but a couple of highlights:

- Life Restored SA, which ministers to trafficked young women (and men) was added to the mix
- The RTC invested in work training and placement through the KRL, hiring a person specifically for this role. Her success in this challenging area has far exceeded expectations, with literally hundreds of workers and their families being assisted.
- There have been many “success stories” in our neighborhood ministry, but one close to our heart is Gina’s story:

We first met Gina almost 4 years ago at a Bible study our church had started for our homeless neighbors. As time went by, many from our congregation grew to love Gina deeply, as did those working in the KRL. Thanks to help from the KRL, Gina made great progress, with many steps forward and backward along the way. From living on the streets and sleeping in the bushes around our own church, with nothing, not even an ID...to receiving social security benefits, Medicare, and finally getting a home in a City senior living apartment.

Sadly, Gina passed away several months ago from complications from her many illnesses, including mental illness. We couldn’t “fix” her but we cared for and loved her. She didn’t die on the streets feeling alone and unloved. Instead, she died in her home knowing she was loved by many and, most importantly, knowing she was loved by God. God used us and our wonderful ministry partners, to share His love and care for Gina. God doesn’t call us to fix our neighbors, he calls us to love them.

1 Peter 4:7-11 MSG *“Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything. Be quick to give a meal to the hungry, a bed to the homeless—cheerfully. Be generous with the different things God gave you, passing them around so all get in on it: if words, let it be God’s words; if help, let it be God’s hearty help. That way, God’s bright presence will be evident in everything through Jesus, and he’ll get all the credit as the One mighty in everything...”*

Financial Health— The crisis revealed the need for financial health teaching and discipleship. Through the vehicle of Ramsey material, a team of people were deployed for classes and a movement was started in San Antonio.

Morris and Muffin Camp led a team to host classes for almost 100 FPC members (with an approximate turnaround in savings and debt reduction of over \$350,000!) and worked with city leaders (through T4SA) to empower churches towards financial health. MarginSA was the specific name for the city movement and in 2021 there were 39 churches (and one synagogue) that participated with more than 4,000 families touched through the Church! MarginSA was featured on News4 WOAI locally and now has a city team committed to carry the banner of financial health and discipleship to 100 churches. This vital ministry will now find a home within the church's organizational structure under the stewardship and finance committee.

Final fund designations. Prior to closing out this task force, we have allocated and designated the balance of funds in the RTC account (all of which, we should note, at this point were funds contributed directly to the RTC by covenant partners). These funds were distributed focusing upon the most significant problem areas discussed above. Funds addressing the mental health area were distributed to support our congregation's counseling ministry and counseling throughout the city (through STCH), children and family focused funds were distributed into the foster care space to support critical new initiatives (through the South Texas Alliance for Orphans) and financial health ministry funds were allocated to the church's citywide ministry efforts in this area (MarginSA).

Conclusion. During our time with the RTC, we have heard repeatedly from city, church and nonprofit leaders just how special it was that First Presbyterian Church decided to step up and attempt to act proactively in regard to the COVID-19 health crises. Much has been accomplished, sometimes through small steps and sometimes through bold moves. *But much of the damage done by this pandemic is only now surfacing...especially in the areas of children and family and mental health.* It will now be up to you, the congregation, and your Session, to support and grow the ministries that have been born out of this pandemic experience and realize our original goals in this area by proactively and creatively growing our church's response to these devastating current realities. As has been mentioned from the pulpit numerous times during this 175th year, the RTC believes strongly that First Presbyterian Church was, indeed, placed here *"for such a time as this."* May God bless you and support your work going forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

Teresa & Ben McCaleb

RTC Task Force Co-Chairs

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

Circle Chairs & Bible Moderators

Circle 1/12

Suzanne Thomas, Chair (210-846-3240)
Grace Labatt, Moderator
Third Monday, 11:30 a.m., Geneva Room (with meal)
Fourth Monday in January

Circle 5

Kay Weber, Co-Chair
(210-288-5290)
Mary Fruge-Medford, Co-Chair
(210-823-7054)
SHAWL MINISTRY
Third Wednesday, 1:00 p.m., Room 228

Circle 6

Jean Parsons, Chair (210-240-7483)
Members of Circle, Moderators
Third Tuesday, 1:30 p.m., McCullough Room

Circle 7

Mary Ellen Mauze, Chair (210-844-5549)
Pat O'Neill, Moderator
Third Tuesday, 11:30 am, in the home of Sheila Murray

Circle 8

Members of Circle Moderators and Co-Chairs
Second Friday, 11:30 am, with lunch
Call Nona Hall for information (210-274-2643)

Circle 9

Ann Smith, Chair (210-822-2440)
Members of Circle, Moderators
Third Tuesday, 10:00 a.m., Breakfast Room

Circle 11

Jean Swanson, Chair (210-826-0766)
Members of Circle, Moderators
Fourth Monday, 6:30 pm, in the home of
Linda Ruhmann

Circle 13

Grace Clouse, Chair, Moderator (734-718-7057)
LITERATURE CIRCLE
Second Tuesday, 1:00 p.m., McCullough Room

Circle 14

Karen Carawan, Chair (210-213-4589)
Suzie Simpson, Moderator
Feb. 28, 12:00 pm, St. Andrews Room (with meal)

Circle 18

Char-An Witten, Chair (210-341-1856)
CIRCLE OF CONCERN
Small home baked cookies always needed
for receptions
Volunteers for help with receptions needed

Circle 20

Muffin Camp, Chair (210-789-1808)
CIRCLE OF SERVICE
Volunteers to make/take meals needed

"A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'"

Isaiah 40:3

I have always been fascinated with John the Baptist. He is actually the last prophet, and his birth and heritage are somewhat similar to Jesus.' They were first cousins and likely grew up knowing each other well. John from an early age shows great depth in his faith. We see this in Jesus at 12 when he remains behind at the temple in Jerusalem to talk to the rabbis. John chooses a radical lifestyle when his ministry begins and Jesus goes his own way with his disciples contrary to the beliefs of the Pharisees and Sadducees. John has a secret though and he is desperate to tell it! Isn't that the way with secrets; you want people to know. When he baptizes Jesus, he knows exactly who is coming and how we should welcome him. The scriptural phrase, prepare the way of the Lord, for me has a great deal to do with the readiness of our hearts to accept, praise and emulate the nature of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Easter is a little late this year - Sunday, April 17. We have time to prepare the way and make straight the highway. Bible study, prayer and fellowship at church are perfect tools.

Women of the Church has planned several events to welcome Easter, spring and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. Please plan to be with us on March 28 for our Spring Luncheon. Our speaker will be Ashlee Kinsel - author, Bible study teacher and blogger. We anticipate her presentation with great excitement. Our luncheon will be in Westminster Hall at 11:30 AM. The cost is \$25 and our lovely table decorations will be for sale for \$40. We were sorry to have to cancel our Ladies Night Out, but we hope to reschedule soon. Our plan is to be as careful as needed for COVID 19 prevention. In the dead of winter throughout most of the country, we must admit South Texas is a lovely home. Women of the Church prays that all of our families will stay safe and healthy.

In Christ Alone,

Janet Wernli

President
Women of the Church



LOVING ONE ANOTHER



KEEPING EVERYONE YOUNG IN SPIRIT

In January, we enjoyed our visit with Tim Morrow from the San Antonio Zoo. We hope to schedule a KEYS trip to the Zoo in the spring.

In February, we will hear from our own Lindsay Selli to learn how she is serving at FPC. Peter Baron will be back with his muzzle Loader, and we are excited to hear Rick Cavender and his band.

Our onsite lunch cost has increased to \$13. Make your reservation by calling the church office.

Rev. Dr. Joe Moore

Minister for Older Adults and Congregational Care

February Events

Feb. 11

Peter Baron America and the Revolution

Feb. 18

Rick Cavender and His Band

Feb. 25

Birthday Lunch at the Menger

Coming in March:

March 4 Nancy Gerfers to awaken the artist in each of us

March 11 Carrie Everson director of Young Adults and Young Women at FPC

March 18 March Birthday Lunch returns to Comfort Cafe

Live Streaming

Watch for the link via email.

Friday Fitness with Jacqi Crow

Friday Fitness will continue via Zoom. This makes it easier for those who are not venturing out to continue participating and is easier for Jacqi to manage. She will send a reminder email each week with the link to the zoom room. There is also a room at the church set up with a computer that will be connected in so you don't have to rush to participate in KEYS.





FIRST CUP READINGS

FEBRUARY, 2022

Blessings and love in Christ,

Sandy Sturch

Dear Family in Christ,

First Cup is designed to assist you in the habit of daily Bible reading and prayer. The name is to remind you that as you reach for your first cup of morning coffee or tea, reach also for your Bible and prayer list. The prayers at the beginning of each week are taken from hymns, sometimes found in obscure hymnals in my library. They are intended to be read as your beginning prayer, to focus your mind on the daily readings that follow. May this spiritual discipline strengthen you as you face each day.

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.— Psalm 143:8

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| <p>1 Psalm 20; Proverbs 15:29; Jeremiah 33:2-3; Psalm 37:4</p> <p>2 Psalm 21; Proverbs 3</p> <p>3 Psalm 22; Hebrews 5:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11</p> <p>4 Psalm 23; John 10</p> <p>5 Psalm 24; Hebrews 12:14-19</p> <p>6 Psalm 25; James 1:1-12 In heavenly love abiding, no change my heart shall fear. And safe is such confiding, for nothing changes here. The storm may roar without me, my heart may low be laid, but God is round about me, and can I be dismayed? Wherever He may guide me, no want shall turn me back. My Shepherd is beside me, and nothing can I lack. His wisdom ever waketh, His sight is never dim; He knows the way I taketh, and I will walk with him. (The Hymnbook, #417)</p> <p>7 Psalm 26; Psalm 1:1-3; James 4:4</p> <p>8 Psalm 27; Psalm 90:13-16</p> <p>9 Psalm 28; 2 Timothy 4:9-18</p> <p>10 Psalm 29; 2 Chronicles 20:1-30</p> <p>11 Psalm 30; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18</p> <p>12 Psalm 31; 27:5; Job 5:17-27</p> <p>13 Psalm 32; James 5:13-19 The steps of those whom He approves are ordered by the Lord; And though they fall, held by His hand, they yet shall be restored. I have not seen, though since my youth full many years have fled, the saint forsaken, nor beheld His children begging bread. The children of the merciful find blessings kept in store; Depart from evil and do good, and live forevermore. Wait on the Lord and keep His way, And then, by Him approved, Thy heritage shall still remain when sinners are removed. Mark well the perfect, upright man, as still his years increase; Behold his life, and thou shalt see His journey end in peace. (The Hymnbook, #422)</p> <p>14 Psalm 33; Jeremiah 33</p> <p>15 Psalm 34; Jeremiah 32:17-44</p> <p>16 Job 21; Psalm 35</p> <p>17 Psalm 36; 1 Peter 2:9-12</p> <p>18 Psalm 37; Proverbs 23:17-18</p> <p>19 Psalm 38; Hebrews 12:1-13</p> <p>20 Psalm 39; Luke 12:13-21 O grant us light, that we may know the wisdom Thou alone canst give; That truth may guide wher-e'er we go, And virtue bless wher-e'er we live. O grant us light, that we may learn</p> | <p>how dead is life from Thee apart, How sure is joy for all who turn to Thee an undivided heart. O grant us light, in grief and pain, To lift our burdened hearts above, And count the very cross a gain, And bless our Father's hidden love. O grant us light, when, soon or late, All earthly scenes shall pass away, In Thee to find the open gate To deathless home and endless day. (The Hymnbook, #335)</p> <p>21 Psalm 40; Psalm 89</p> <p>22 Psalm 41; James 5:13-20</p> <p>23 Psalm 42; 57:1-3; Job 35</p> <p>24 Psalm 43; Psalm 84</p> <p>25 Psalm 44; Romans 8:13-39</p> <p>26 Psalm 45; Hebrews 1</p> <p>27 Psalm 46; Psalm 9:9-10; Psalm 14 The heavens declare Thy glory Lord, In every star Thy wisdom shines; But when our eyes behold thy Word, we read Thy name in fairer lines. The rolling sun, the changing light, And nights and days, Thy power confess; But the blest Volume Thou hast writ reveals Thy justice and Thy Grace. Sun, moon, and stars convey Thy praise round the whole earth, and never stand; so when Thy truth began its race, it touched and glanced on every land. Nor shall Thy spreading gospel rest till through the world Thy truth has run; Till Christ has all the nations blest that see the light, or feel the sun. (The Hymnbook, # 259)</p> <p>28 Psalm 47; I Chronicles 16</p> |
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FIRST CUP PRAYER LIST

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. (Romans 8:26).

[illegible]

WELCOME HOME VERSION 2



BOOKLETS AVAILABLE IN
MAUZE LOBBY & THE NARTHEX.

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**LOVING CHRIST.
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LOVING THE CITY.**

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