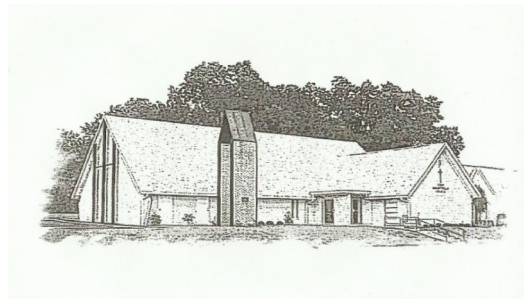




**First  
Presbyterian  
Church**  
Henderson, Texas



903-657-2529

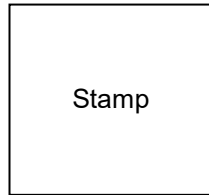
[www.fpchendersontx.org](http://www.fpchendersontx.org)



*"Serving God,  
Honoring Creation,  
Embracing Differences"*



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**P. O. BOX 773**  
**HENDERSON, TEXAS 75653-0773**



# Connections

**First Presbyterian Church**  
Henderson, Texas August 2023 Vol. 55:08

*Present to the Presence*

Are you present to the presence of God in your life? We tend to talk about being present to the Presence as if it were a mystical state of being. Like many aspects of our faith, practicing being present is much simpler than we make it.

It is an important endeavor because God is with us. Yet, if we are unable to notice God's presence, then we cannot discover the support, solace, and joy of God's nearness. Embracing God among us is like an invitation we have forgotten to accept. We strive to live according to the prime commands of loving God and loving neighbor as we love ourselves, but enjoying God with us here and now, in this present moment, is a challenge for many of us.

Realizing that God is with us is not a matter of adding to our busy lives, but a choice to surrender. Richard Rohr describes being present as a refusal to focus on the future or the past. Only when we resist longing for the past or worrying about the future can we begin to experience God's presence here with us. When we are not distracted by trying to be three places at once, our minds are open to what is happening now. In THIS current moment is where we meet God.

*"If we can't be positively present right now without creating a problem [to solve], nothing new is ever going to happen. ...We will never experience the unexpected depth and contentment that is always being offered to us."*

We work so hard to resist moments of awe and wonder, but these are glimpses of how our lives could be. In God's presence we have a clearer perspective on God's kin-dom in our midst, not some far-off day in the future, but right now.

It takes practice to find oneself in the presence of God. We have to let go of the worldly encumbrances that keep us bound to distractions that threaten to overcome God's place in our lives. But Christ offers to share the yoke, the Spirit promises to intervene with sighs too deep for words, and God is always with us.


Can we accept the depth and contentment of life lived in God's presence? May it be so!

*Rev Michele*

The shelves are critically low at the **Henderson Interchurch Ministry**. If you can help with the needed items, please bring to the church or to H.I.M. at 769 State Hwy 64 W. in Henderson. Hours of operation are Monday—Thursday 8 am—12 pm.

Your help will be gratefully received.

Things needed:

canned veggies	jelly	noodles—assorted		
peanut butter	canned fruit	mashed potatoes		
hearty soups	spaghetti o's	spaghetti sauce		
mac & cheese	ramen noodles	pinto beans		cereal/oatmeal
rice	canned beans	corn bread mix		crackers

While the **Communications Team** did not formally meet in July, we have continued to stay connected through e-mail and texts and calls doing what we do best – “communicating.”

Our résumé includes keeping the church website updated and the Facebook page active with current postings. We collect newsletter submissions every third Friday of the month, proofread newsletter drafts, and sign off on the newsletter for publication and distribution.

Additionally, our committee posts the weekly church service bulletin and monthly newsletter to the website, we assist with streaming worship services, we post songs used in the worship services to licensing companies each week as required by copyright laws, and we assist as needed with newspaper columns.



We have dedicated team members on our committee, and we are honored to serve the congregation.

Your Communications Team – Liz, Claudia, Weldon, Kathy, and Rev. Michele

### THE STAFF

Pastor – Rev Michele Goff  
[ReverendGoff@gmail.com](mailto:ReverendGoff@gmail.com)

Administrative Assistant – Debbi Ricci  
[hendersonfirstpres@gmail.com](mailto:hendersonfirstpres@gmail.com)

Music Director – Joshua Allen

### THE SESSION

Liz Cross  
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Steve Lowe  
 903-658-0323  
[stevel@lowetractor.com](mailto:stevel@lowetractor.com)

Kathy Porter - Clerk of Session  
 903-646-0162  
[kathyporter301@gmail.com](mailto:kathyporter301@gmail.com)

### FINANCE AT A GLANCE



<b>June 2023:</b>		
IN	<b>OUT</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>
\$17,629**	\$13,181	\$4,448
<b>May 2023:</b>		
IN	<b>OUT</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>
\$84,846*	\$12,351	\$72,495
<b>Year to Date:</b>		
IN	<b>OUT</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>
\$138,086	\$74,974	\$63,112

\*Includes \$75,117.80 insurance receipt for roof damage.

\*\* Includes \$10,796.30 insurance receipt for roof damage.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that a 20-minute nature break relieves stress? In an article produced by the American Psychological Association entitled “Nurtured by nature,” it shows that psychological research is advancing our understanding of how time in nature can improve our mental health and sharpen our cognition. Scientists are compiling evidence of the value of getting out into the natural world.

From a stroll through a city park to a day spent hiking in the wilderness, exposure to nature has been linked to a host of benefits, including improved attention, lower stress, better mood, and even upticks in empathy and cooperation. Psychological research is still fine-tuning our understanding of the potential benefits of being in nature. In the process, scientists are charting a course for policymakers and the public to better tap



into the healing powers of Mother Nature. “There is mounting evidence, from dozens and dozens of researchers, that nature has benefits for both physical and psychological human well-being,” says Lisa Nisbet, PhD, a psychologist at Trent University in Ontario, Canada, who studies connectedness to nature. “You can boost your mood just by walking in nature, even in urban nature. And the sense of connection you have with the natural world seems to contribute to happiness even when you’re not physically immersed in Nature.” Policymakers, city planners, environmental organizations and government agencies are coming around to the importance of natural space.

There is urgency in fostering these connections, says Nisbet. Because while people benefit from their connection with the natural world, the environment also benefits when people feel connected and committed to caring for the Earth—and between climate change and habitat loss, the planet is in serious need of some care. “When people are disconnected from nature, they aren’t motivated to work on wicked problems like climate change. We’re losing the environments that contribute to our flourishing,” she says. “The key question is, how do we help people feel connected to nature so we’re motivated to protect the places that will help us thrive?”

**Christian Education Green Team**



WOW – we have had some opportunities facing the **Building & Grounds Team** lately. How lucky are we to have such an active, engaged and willing group of folks that are caring for the church – inside and out.

To update you all – We have fingers crossed that the new roof installation will begin on Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup> and hopefully be completed that Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. It’s no accident that it is scheduled to miss church on Sundays going on! We’re clever like that.

We also have an ever so important opportunity with the air conditioning in the Fellowship Hall area. We are assessing and several of our team members will

be looking into and making a recommendation for additional maintenance or replacement. Michael has some experience in this area and will be lending his knowledge to our recommendation.

Then we have the fridge in the kitchen that is on the blink. And by that, we mean don’t use it. Thankfully, we have the back-up fridge in the old Kids for God room that is being more fully utilized. Special thanks to Debbi for noticing and cleaning up some of the water residue when the kitchen unit blinked.

We also ask that everyone be aware of making sure the air conditioning units at the church are in auto mode and when we’re not in the church to return the setting to a temperature of 78 and that all lights are turned off. If you or your group use the church or if you are just there during off hours, please make sure to check these items before you leave. Your assistance in helping keep our utility bills down as much as possible will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Other than that... . . . In all seriousness, in this time of the excessive heat, we remind you to keep yourself, your pets and plants hydrated.

Remember to stay safe, cool and happy,

Steve, Tom, John, Weldon, Charlie, Michael, Kathy, Claudia & Rev. Michele





**“Teachers plant the seeds of knowledge that grow forever”**

While they aren’t planting watermelon seeds, they are planting knowledge seeds. As we prepare for kids to return to school, remember to take care and caution as you drive in school areas and give our teachers love and respect.

Tradition has become that Outreach and Fellowship partner for a fun Watermelon Bust in August. Outreach shares ice cold watermelons during the Adopt-A-Block, and Fellowship invites our friends and congregation to join us after for a juicy good time. Please come and join us for a cold piece (or two) of watermelon on Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. If you come before dinner, it can be your appetizer and if you come after it can be dessert! Win-Win.

The heat of the summer and some air conditioning opportunities have prevented us from having group gatherings. But, we hope to remedy that in the Fall months. Stay tuned!

Home communion visits continue on the first Sunday of each month after church service. Extending our table is a welcomed time for in-person visits with our friends and members. Communion and home communion for August will be on Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup>. As always, remember to keep our friends and members in your prayers.

There is always room at our table and in our hearts for everyone.  
Claudia, Lynn, John, Kathy, Chris, Suzanne, Weldon, Mary & Rev. Michele

**The Outreach Team** continues to discuss our current outreach projects and look for new ways to reach out to our congregation and to the community.

Our Hustle Kindness initiative has been going good and we intend to “hustle” another unsuspecting but deserving group in Henderson this month. We are also involved and supporting the Yates Park School Supply



Drive. The distribution of school supplies will be on Friday, August 4<sup>th</sup> at the Henderson Civic Center. They will be putting the backpacks together on Thursday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> beginning at 8:00 am at the Civic Center if you want to lend a helping hand. Our congregation was once again very generous in participating in this project. Outreach Team designated this project to receive the portion of the Pentecost Special Offering that our church retained.

HIM continues to have large numbers of our citizens and neighbors that are needing extra help with food. For your consideration, Kroger’s brand of vegetables and fruits are not only less expensive, but if you belong to the Kroger Care program with our church as your designated beneficiary, you and we will get more bang for the buck as the church receives accumulated funds from the Kroger Cares program.

Once again, our August Adopt-A-Block will have the Outreach Team and the Fellowship Team combining effort and invitation. First, we will gather at 5:30 to distribute ice-cold watermelons to our neighbors! Then plan to come join us in “Fellowship” with good company, good conversation and good watermelon.

As we’ve noted before, the needs in the community are great. HIM and Salvation Army have had to discontinue providing assistance with rent and utilities as their funds are also limited. We, too, have had to pull back a little on responding to repeat requesters to our church. We have helped where and when we can; however, our funds are limited for this mission as well. As you will see in the Building and Grounds article, we’ve had several opportunities for giving back to the church – roof, air conditioning repair, carpet and maintenance. We are thankful to work with you to show Christ’s love and care to our church, our community, and our world.

Outreach Team

Lynn, Mary, Kathy, Claudia, John, Kelly, Louise, Jimmy & Rev. Michele

A new month is upon us. As such, we will be sharing the Lord's Table on the first Sunday of this new month on August 6<sup>th</sup>. In addition to in person communion, we also provide Home Communion to our friends and members after worship service. We extend the Lord's Table to everyone.

Please also remember that we have designated the first Sunday of every month as the special day to bring food items to the church to help us fill the pantry at HIM. You can bring items anytime, however, this is the day we've set as a specific request. Please also note that HIM continues to have lots of requests for food assistance and they are running low on supplies. Give as generously as you can.

The Christian Education Team sets the studies for the Sunday School lessons but it is the precursor to our weekly worship service. Given that, the Worship Team invites you to come and participate in the weekly Sunday School lessons which begin on Sundays at 9:45 am in the parlor. Everyone is welcome.

Our worship service begins at 11:00 in our sanctuary (and on Facebook Live). It is a good way to start the day and week -- music, fellowship, and message.

**The Worship Team,**

Mary, Liz, Jimmy, Joshua, Kathy, Lynn and Rev. Michele



While the **Christian Education Team** did not meet in July, we have continued in contact through email, texts and calls.

We did provide the Presbytery information they requested about our Gun Violence/Safety activity. The magazine did a special issue on American Gun Violence in June. The special issue addressed how people of faith can interrupt and rewrite the tragic American story of gun violence. Asked about what individual churches are doing, our letter described what social justice actions our Christian Education team has taken in this discussion.

Vacation Church School with First Christian Church was a wonderful success with 23 children participating along with a slew of interested adults and older children. The theme was "Growing in Jesus." Our church was represented by Kathy Porter, Lynn Tieken and Rev. Michele. Rev. Michele shared the story of "the Mustard Seed". The children learned how our faith grows as we study God's word.



FPC Amigos - Lynn, Michele, and Kathy-assisted with the "Grow in Jesus" Vacation Bible School at First Christian Church on July 15th.



Speaking of studying and sharing God's word, the Sunday School class has finished the study of Matthew by N.T. Wright. The next session is a video-based, six-session study from Grace Presbytery's Resource Center titled: "Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws" by Adam Hamilton. This study explores the ministry of Jesus as told in the Gospel of Luke and will begin on July 30<sup>th</sup>. We meet in the Parlor on Sunday mornings at 9:45 am. Even if you miss a lesson, you are still welcome and will enjoy the remaining teachings. Please join with us any Sunday.

Lynn and Kathy continue their work in the church library to complete and update additions that have been donated.

Peace be with you, Lynn, Claudia, Kathy, Liz, Jimmy, Rev. Michele

# August 2023



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

		1	2	3	4 Meals on Wheels	5
6 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee Fellowship 11:00 Worship Sanctuary/FB / Communion Home Communion	7	8	9	10 9:30 Chamber Coffee at Henderson Metro Church	11 Meals on Wheels	12
13 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee Fellowship 11:00 Worship Sanctuary/FB 3:00 Walk with a Doc	14 5:30 Adopt-a-Block	15	16	17 2:00 L.E.A.N. 6:00 Session Meeting	18 Meals on Wheels Newsletter Deadline	19
20 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee Fellowship 11:00 Worship Sanctuary/FB Outreach Meeting	21	22	23	24	25 Meals on Wheels	26
27 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee Fellowship 11:00 Worship Sanctuary/FB	28	29	30	31		

**Duty Elder for August:**  
John T.

**Liturgists for August:**  
6— Kathy  
13— John T.  
20— Steve  
27— Jimmy

**August Birthdays:**  
1— Joshua  
3— Laborn C.  
14— Michael D.  
18— Assane  
19— Tom L.  
22— Weldon  
22— Kirsten R.  
24— Andrew R.  
27— Charlie C.  
28— Tammy