

Grace First Presbyterian Church

*Grace First Presbyterian together ... worshipping God,
witnessing for Jesus, and working to meet human needs.*

**F E B R U A R Y
2 0 2 0**

P A S T O R A S H L E Y ' S P E A C E

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We will celebrate

HOLY COMMUNION

Sunday, Feb. 2
Sunday, Mar. 1

STAR WORD FEBRUARY PROMPT

You've been sitting with your star word for a month. What struggles, challenges, and/or uncomfortable growing areas have you encountered through your star word?

We have just returned from our trip to Brownsville and Matamoros. We had 14 team members from Grace First and 7 joining us through various connections from as far away as North Carolina and Wisconsin. We learned a lot, we were challenged, we heard stories that we could not have imagined, we met a lot of good people, and we saw humanity at its best.

One of the ways I witnessed humanity at its best was within our own group. Those team members representing Grace First embraced those joining us from other places in a way that is rare to find in a group (yet should be expected in a group of Christians!). Defenses were down, arms were wide open, and it was felt by those who weren't sure who they would be traveling with and whether or not they would be welcomed as part of the team.

Secondly, when it came time to serve food to or talk with any asylum seekers, or volunteers, our team was engaged, ready to act, embracing each and every person with smiles and broken Spanish. The love of our team members was poured out, and they received love in return. I believe you will hear those very stories as you talk with the team members and hear them tell about their experiences.

Being with this group reminded me once again why I have loved joining alongside of you over the past 10 months. This community has a way of making itself open and inviting in ways that many no longer experience in a church. You all allow Christ to shine through you and it's a remarkable thing to witness! I know we will have numerous other opportunities to see Christ shining through those who went on this trip and those of you who will serve God's children in Weatherford, and in our church building, or even on another trip (hint, hint). God is doing great things in and through the people of Grace First! Continue to pray for God to guide us in how we can best serve all God's children in the days and weeks ahead, both communally and individually.

FROM THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

It has been a few months since I shared a devotion from my daily devotional *"My Utmost for His Highest"* by Oswald Chambers. The one I read yesterday at the time I wrote this article spoke volumes to me and I hope it speaks to you as well.

Transformed by Insight

The outstanding characteristic of a Christian is this unveiled frankness before God so that the life becomes a mirror for other lives. By being filled with the Spirit we are transformed, and by beholding we become mirrors. You always know when a person has been beholding the glory of the Lord, you feel in your inner spirit that they are the mirror of the Lord's own character. Beware of anything which would sully that mirror in you; it is nearly always a good thing, the good that is not the best.

The golden rule for your life and mine is this concentrated keeping of the life open towards God. Let everything else – work, clothes, food, everything on earth – go by the board, saving that one thing. The rush of other things always tends to obscure this concentration on God. We have to maintain ourselves in the place of the beholding, keeping the life absolutely spiritual all through. Let other things come and go as they may, let other people criticize as they will, but never allow anything to obscure the life that is hid with Christ in God. Never be hurried out of the relationship of abiding in Him. It is the one thing that is apt to fluctuate but it ought not to. The severest discipline of a Christian's life is to learn how to keep "beholding as in the glass the glory of the Lord."

"And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit"
2 Corinthians 3:18

YOUTH SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday, Feb. 2 – No Youth

Sunday, Feb. 16 – Youth 5 pm

Wednesday, Feb. 5 – LOGOS

Wednesday, Feb. 19 – LOGOS @ Cici's

Sunday, Feb. 9 – No Youth

Sunday, Feb. 26 – Youth 5 pm

Wednesday, Feb. 12 – LOGOS

Wednesday, Feb. 26 – Ash Wednesday LOGOS

Youth Group is open to youth in grades 6th–12th. If your child is interested in participating in Youth Group activities, please contact David Slyter.

MARIALICE'S MUSIC NOTES

THE HYMNS WE SING

"Dear Lord and Father of Mankind"

Rest

Glory To God, page 169

The author of this thoughtful text has often been called "America's beloved Quaker poet". He is generally regarded as one of our nation's ablest and most distinguished poets. John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) wrote this hymn text in 1872 to express his Quaker conviction that the way to God was through simplicity and sincerity.

Whittier is often grouped with his famed New England literary contemporaries: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell and Oliver Wendell Holmes. However, because of the extreme poverty in which he was raised in his rural New England Quaker home, Whittier did not have a formal college education. He had little personal knowledge of hymn singing, since the Quakers did not allow singing in their services at that time. Whittier once remarked: "Two hundred years of silence has taken all the sing out of the Quakers." Though he wrote no hymns as such, hymnal editors have taken enough excerpts from his poems to make seventy-five hymns. In that way, it can be said that Whittier has written more poems that are used as hymns than any other American poet.

Frederick C. Maker, the composer of this tune, "Rest," was known as an accomplished Irish musician and composer. Maker travelled extensively and lived in various parts of the world. It is said that he gave so many concerts in poor areas that he was known for accepting anything of value for his concerts. It is recorded that the box office receipts of one of his concerts included 100 sheep and a number of chickens. The tune "Rest" was composed for Whittier's text, in 1887, for use in the *Congregational Church Hymnal*, published in London.

*Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find, in deeper reverence, praise.*

Presbyterian Women—Invites the congregation to participate in another way to help those in need at Manna. Toiletries are a constant need; please bring any size of shampoo, soaps, lotions, toothbrushes and toothpastes, feminine hygiene products, etc. If you would like to help in this way, there will be a container in the Narthex. Thank you!

MINISTRIES & OUTREACH

MINISTRY MEETINGS

Session

Thurs. Feb. 20, 6:15 p.m.

Personnel

Tues. Feb. 4, 6:15 p.m.

Worship & Music

Mon. Feb. 3, 5:00 p.m.

Mission & Outreach

Thurs. Feb. 6, 6:00 p.m.

Property

Sat. Feb. 1, 9:00 a.m.

Trustees

Wed. Feb. 5, 9:30 a.m.

Christian Education

Sun. Feb. 9, 12:00 p.m.

Communications

Tues. Feb. 24, 12:00 p.m.

Board of Deacons

Sun. Feb. 9, 12:00 p.m.

In-Touch

Thurs. Feb. 20, 5:30 p.m.

Congregational Life

Thurs. Feb. 13, 6:15 p.m.



PW Coordinating Team—Thursday, Feb. 6, 9:00 am

Circle 2—Tuesday, Feb. 11, 12:00 pm

Evening Circle—Monday, Feb. 17, 6:00 pm

MANNA UPDATE

EMPHASIS FOR FEBRUARY

Any and all canned goods, including canned fruits, vegetables, soups, and 1lb bags of rice and pinto beans, 1 lb boxes of spaghetti

Please put your donations in the grocery cart in the Narthex each Sunday or bring by the church office during the week.



The *Feasting on the Word* adult Sunday School class meets in Room 25 each week at 9:15 a.m. You are invited to join us as we discuss and share ideas.

FEBRUARY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Deacon Assignments:

Erika Trevino & Richard Varnon

Greeters:

February 2—Linda Skov & Linda Snow

February 9—Scout Troop 76

February 16—Susie Bossert & Janelle Currin

February 23—Jim & Janet Duncan

Lay Leaders:

February 2—Erik Skov

February 9—Judy Rawlins

February 16—Lance Mertz

February 23—Rebecca Williams

Communion Elders: Kelly Baggett, Joe Barnhart, Nancy Deison, & Jean Thomason

Communion Set and Clean Up:

Sally Arnold, Melanie Curtin, Ashley Garcia, & Dawn Kahlden



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & CONGRATULATIONS



Grace First welcomed the following
friends and guests
during the month of

JANUARY

Joy & Starr Bowen

M.E. Clarey

Brian Conaster

Rob Douglass

Jane & Bob Glover

Cindy & Roland Johnson

Jim & Kate Juengerman

Brett Williams

Andre Rabideau

Ann Shields

Stephanie Williams



MEETING OF GRACE PRESBYTERY

Saturday, February 22, 2020
at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church
in Dallas, Texas



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

To the following GFPC members:

FEBRUARY

Minnie Orm	3	Nancy Richards	20
Jackie Case	7	Myrna Fields	22
Dawn Kahlden	12	Wade Williams	23
Sue Masterson	12	Mark Eidson	26
Ron Hansen	16	Sam Park	28
Laura Brice	20		



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We have been blessed with the following new
member who recently joined our church.

Please welcome her to our church family.



Larry & Kay Hale

In Memoriam

We thank God for the life of

TOM MARTIN

September 25, 1941
January 18, 2020

We join with the family in sharing the hope that
we have in life eternal through Jesus Christ.

Chair Yoga is cancelled on

Tuesday, March 3

Due to the Great Hall being an Election site.

Annual Congregational Meeting January 26, 2020

On Sunday, January 26 the congregation was called to meet by the Session for the annual Congregational meeting. The purpose of the meeting was (1) to hear a proposed change in the GFPC bylaws from 12 to 9 Ruling Elders, (2) To hear a request for a continued suspension of the GFPC bylaws as it relates to the number of Deacons currently serving, (3) to elect members of the nominating committee for 2020-2021 and (4) to hear a report on various GFPC activities as planned for 2020.

The resolutions to the above items include:

1. The recommended changes to the GFPC bylaws were adopted as follows:
“The congregation shall elect nine (9) elders divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the annual congregational meeting for a three-year term.”
2. The bylaw as related to the election of deacons was suspended for two years at the 2018 Annual Congregational Meeting. This was done to permit a trial period of two years to determine if nine (9) deacons divided into three equal classes were adequate to serve the needs of GFPC. After this two-year period Session remains uncertain as to whether reducing the number of deacons from 12 to 9 is the appropriate action. Therefore, Session asked the congregation to extend the 2-year trial period for another year to provide a 3-year trial period. This will allow for complete analysis of the Diaconate work and need within the congregation. Permanent change of the bylaw or reversion to the current bylaw will be presented to the congregation for resolution in January 2021.
3. The following people were named and/or elected as members of the 2020 Nominating Committee:

Representing the Session – Linda Crownover and Jeff Kahlden
Representing the Diaconate – Mac Smith
Representing the Congregation (no current elders or deacons) – Dianna Dixon, Bettie Riall, Marti Rosché, and David Rothrock
4. The annual report can be found on page 7 of the newsletter. These reports list many of the programs and activities carried out by the various ministries of GFPC in 2019 and some of the programs and activities planned for 2020. If you are interested in participating in any of the ministry teams of the church please contact the ministry chairs and/or your Pastors.

Grace First Presbyterian 2019 Annual Ministry Board Reports

Christian Education, submitted by Leslie Goeldner

In 2019, the Christian Education Ministry worked to offer activities, events, and Bible study opportunities for all ages that would help people to learn about Jesus and how to love. Some of the ways we taught about Jesus were through Sunday morning classes, LOGOS, VBS, Eggstravaganza, and Children's Worship. We held multi-generational events/activities like Trunk or Treat, Kids Against Hunger Packings, 3 Wishes, Christmas Caroling, and Deck the Halls with Congregational Life Ministry to show love to our congregation and neighbors.

Communications, submitted by Jeff Kahlden

The communications ministry continued to build upon the momentum that was established in the first year set by the preceding year's ministry. The ministry has moved forward on reaching out to the families and members of the church and wider community with the newsletter, emails, social media, and any other formats available. The social media presence has greatly increased with numerous posts on Facebook and Instagram. The ministry will continue to grow as we plan to have a workshop with presbytery and invest in improving our communications methods.

Mission & Outreach, submitted by Stephanie Eidson

The Mission and Outreach Ministry of Grace First Presbyterian Church reflects the heart and soul of our congregation. The ministry reaches out and touches organizations at the local level with the Weekend Food Back Program at Bill Wright Elementary, county level with Manna Store House, Trinity Habitat for Humanity, Children's Advocacy Center, Parker County Senior Center and the local Food Truck Pantry just to name a few. At the state level, Carter Blood Center with sponsoring blood drives, the national level by supporting Mission from PCUSA as in Joy and Pentecost offerings and on the international level sponsoring Kids Against Hunger packings along with various mission trips abroad including Guatemala with a book drive, and border mission trip with monetary support. The Mission and Outreach Ministry is always looking outside of the box for new mission opportunities at all levels of Christian compassion and love.

Personnel, submitted by Marion Harris

In 2019 the Personnel Ministry of Grace First Presbyterian Church hired a new pastor for head of staff. We began the process of reviewing job descriptions, the Personnel handbook and The Nursery worker's handbook. We are in the process of hiring 2 nursery workers.

Continued on page 8..

Grace First Presbyterian 2019 Annual Ministry Board Reports Continued

Property, submitted by Karen Lail

The Property Ministry provided maintenance and care for the physical church building including the structure and surrounding grounds. Members also supervised outside contractors that were needed to repair, replace or remodel the building and equipment of the church. The Ministry meets on the first Saturday of each month and as needed during the month to accomplish any necessary tasks to maintain the church as an inviting and up to date place for the congregation.

Stewardship, submitted by Dave Deison

Thanks to your prayerful and generous commitments 76.17% of the new budget is covered with pledges and 20.68% is covered with existing, dedicated funds. You all committed to cover 96% (\$395,260) of the requested \$411, 626 pledge amount of the overall budget. Many of you also made commitments of time and talent without which the ministry of the church could not be fulfilled. Some of you are taking on new challenges and others are continuing your commitments to areas of ministry within the church that you have long held dear. Either way, your commitments are used to bring Christ into the world.

Board of Trustees, submitted by Linda Crownover

Trustees review investments and make recommendation regarding the appropriate use of the investments. Recommended to Session the transfer of the Landscape Fund which is approximately \$15,000 to the Texas Presbyterian Foundation. Recommended a one-time distribution from the Dore Downs Fund to sponsor two rooms at the new Children's Advocacy Center of Parker County. A quarterly donation toward the operating expenses of the CAC will begin in January 2020 and will be reviewed annually.

Worship and Music, submitted by Jill Bray

The Worship & Music Ministry was excited to begin working with our new pastor in the spring of 2019. Pastor Ashley related her vision of the Worship & Music Ministry as being a creative body that helps plan what worship services will look like during each season, keeping them fresh and new. With that vision in mind, the ministry, in consultation with the Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Director of Music/Organist, planned for or approved regular Sunday worship services as well as special services during the year. Special services included Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Reformation, All Saints, Longest Night, Christmas Eve, Gifts of Women, Summer Sermon Series, Children's Sabbath, and the Children's Christmas Musical. Music from the choirs and individuals lent inspiration to the services throughout the year. In addition, schedules for Lay Leaders, those serving Communion, volunteers for Communion set-up and clean-up, greeters (which has now been moved to the In Touch Ministry) were coordinated and the Wedding Booklet and Funeral/Memorial Booklet were both reviewed and updated.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

2

Sunday, February 2, will be our Souper Bowl of Caring. We will be collecting canned goods and monetary donations. All donations will go to Manna Storehouse, Inc.

SCOUT SUNDAY

9

Sunday, February 9, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. in the Great Hall, the congregation of Grace First Presbyterian Church is invited to enjoy a pancake breakfast provided by the Scouts and leaders of Scout Troop 76. This is the Troop's way of saying "Thank You!" to the members of Grace First for supporting Scouting for over 50 years. Come and enjoy a delicious breakfast! Scout Troop 76 will be helping during the morning worship service by greeting members and visitors, passing out bulletins, and taking the offertory.

16

THIRD SUNDAY LUNCH CHILI/CHOCOLATE COOK-OFF

Sunday, February 16, after worship in the Great Hall. After sampling and voting for your favorite chocolate and chili dish, you may choose your favorite to eat for lunch. The congregation is asked to bring cornbread, crackers, or other dishes that will go with chili. Hotdogs, fixings, and Fritos will be provided for the children.

Please see page 10 for more information.

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ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Wednesday, February 26 at 5:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary followed by the LOGOS Dinner at 6:15. Ash Wednesday marks the first day of Lent, the period of preparation leading up to Easter. The Ash Wednesday service will be a time of reflection, prayer and confession along with the placing of ashes on the forehead as a sign of repentance. All ages are encouraged to attend.

10th Annual Chili/Chocolate Cook-Off

February 16, 2020, Following worship in the Great Hall

You may participate by either entering your best chili &/or chocolate recipe into the contest or by coming to sample all of the entries and voting for your favorite. Either way, it's fun for all attending!

If you are interested in participating in the cook-off, please sign up on the Stewardship Covenant insert or contact the church office.

Rules for entering the contest are as follows:

Double your recipe, unless it feeds 24.

Bring your entries to church between 9:00 & 9:30 a.m. Food needs to be ***Fully cooked*** before arriving at the church.

Chili must be in a crock pot or something similar to keep it warm.

Chili needs to be marked mild, medium, or hot.

Mark type of meat used in the chili-venison, pork, beef, chicken, etc.

Give your entries creative names - think outside the box.

Presentation is very important on chocolate entries - ***decorate your space!***

The "official" judging will start at 9:45 a.m. A first, second, and third place will be awarded in each category, with certificates awarded to the winners.

In addition, a People's Choice Award will be determined during this event when folks "vote" by placing beans in jars marked for each entry. The most beans collected in each category will be the "People's Choice".

After sampling and voting, you may choose your favorite to eat for lunch.

**The congregation is asked to bring cornbread, crackers,
or other dishes that will go with chili. Hotdogs, fixings,
and Fritos will be provided for the children.**

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

The Kate Rieves Scholarship and Caroline Dickerson Scholarship applications are now available.

Caroline Dickerson was a long-time member of our church and life-long advocate for education. Upon her death in 2006 the Scholarship in her name, was established for unmarried students.

The Kate Rieves Scholarship was begun in 1971 and is awarded each year to “deserving Christian students.” This fund was established to honor Kate Rieves, wife of the Rev. S.L. Rieves (pastor of First Presbyterian Church, 1913-1917) and a longtime church school teacher in our congregation.

An applicant letter along with the application are available on the Narthex table. **Please read the letter and application carefully** as they detail all the requirements. You may apply for both scholarships, but can only be awarded one.

Deadline for turning in applications is **March 15, 2020.**

KANS FOR KIDS UPDATE & REMINDER

Thank you to all who have helped with the Kans for Kids program which allows us to recycle aluminum and tin cans and give all of the money to kindergarteners in Weatherford elementary schools. Last week \$50.00 was given to five different schools so all kiddos were able to purchase his/her own book from the book fair. We hope to give to one more school.

Aluminum drink cans bring the most money when recycled but tin cans help too. The tin cans need to be rinsed out and the paper label must be removed.

May God bless these little ones as we aid in giving to them the gift of reading.

Linda Young

CHURCH OFFICER NOMINATING COMMITTEE

During the January 26th Congregational Meeting, the following members were elected to serve on this year's Church Officer Nominating Committee: Dianna Dixon, Bettie Riall, Marti Rosché, and David Rothrock.

They will join Linda Crownover & Jeff Kahlden, Session representatives, and Mac Smith, Board of Deacons representative.

Please keep the committee in your prayers as they strive to discern God's call for three persons to be elected as elders to serve 3 year term June 2020-May 2023 and three persons to be elected as deacons to serve a 3 year term (June 2020-May 2023).

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Members and Their Families

Linda Skov
 Donna Allen
 Joan Farley
 Deb Kaiser
 Dave Young
 Wendy Bates
 Melvin Dale
 Gene Dawson
 Pete Coffey, Brother of Robyn Coffey
 Ann Binford, Sister of Jill Bray

Friends

Taylor Pegram, Daughter of Kevin Goeldner's Co-worker
 Diana Britt, Friend of the Furst Family
 Sara Casey, Sister of Gary Sheffield
 Bill & Joann Stolfutz, Friends of Gene & Martha Dawson
 Ann Burdett, Co-worker of Roberta Furman
 Kati Hamilton, Daughter of Linda Tingle
 Autumn Reed, Friend of Deb Kaiser

Continuing Concerns

Kathy Coats, Sister of Dawn Kahlden
 Carol Gomez, Sister of Dawn Kahlden
 Grainger Weston, Father of Sarah Eidson
 Nona, Mother of Deb Kaiser
 Greg, Father of Shanteé Siebuhr
 Don Jones, Cousin of Roberta Furman
 Chloe-Marion Perry, Mother of Marion Harris
 Gerald Perry, Father of Marion Harris

Homebound and Nursing Home Members

Christene Donnell, College Park
 Ginger Goeldner, Clear Fork Assisted Living
 Frank & Arda Morgan, Elmcroft of Graham
 Kakie Williams, Martin Crest
 Bel Wise, Brookdale
 Dannie Woodard, Home

GRACE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

www.gracefirstpc.org

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

Sunday School Classes—9:15 a.m.
 Coffee Fellowship—10:25 a.m.
 Sunday Morning Worship—10:40 a.m.

STAFF

Pastor, Ashley Drake Mertz
 Associate Pastor, David A. Slyter
 Ministers, The Congregation
 Dir. of Music & Organist, Marialice Parish, M. M.
 Office Coordinator, Lacey VanPay
 Financial Administrator, Alycia Nelson



PHONE NUMBERS

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 512-940-9301 Pastor David's Cell

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