

THE Penn Street LETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

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"Let There Be Light" Haiti Mission Trip Installs Solar Panels

by Craig Becker

Almost 2 billion people on the planet have no access to electric power. In an effort to provide solar-powered electrical systems to those in need, "Solar Under the Sun" (SUS) was established as an ecumenical mission ministry of the Synod of the Sun, PCUSA. First Pres began a partnership with SUS last year, and several FPC members have been trained by SUS to perform site surveys and develop covenant relationships with in-country partners, while others have received technical training on how to design and install these systems.

After completing a site survey in January of this year, four FPC members (Craig Becker, Jimmy DeFoor, Ben Osborne and Ralph Reece), along with SUS instructor Sally Smith, journeyed to Haiti for seven days in early April to install a solar power system for a high school located in the small mountainous village of Cherident. This 10-room school, which is four hours by car from Port-au-Prince, was just recently rebuilt with support from the Haiti Education Foundation, after having been destroyed in the 2010 earthquake. Extensive planning was necessary to complete the system design prior to the trip, and decisions had to be made regarding which components could be purchased in-country, and what pieces would have to be packed and flown into Haiti with us.

Upon arriving at the school on Tuesday, the team was both surprised and pleased to find 15 people ready, willing and able to lend a hand! As a result, tremendous progress was made during the first two days. Electric lights and outlets were installed in every classroom, along with two outdoor security lights. Additionally, 14 outlets were installed in the 'computer lab' to provide power for laptops that will soon be purchased.

There was an unexpected 'bump in the road' later in the week when we discovered that a key part was missing. However, our in-country partners, Lucson and Hems, provided outstanding support, and after much searching they obtained the part in Port-au-Prince within 24 hours. The part was then installed and Voila! – Let There Be Light! The system worked perfectly, just as designed!

A short training class was then held on Saturday to teach the local operators how to maintain the system. The next day we all attended the local Episcopal church service, then the entire congregation walked the short distance across the road to bless the school and the new power system.

At first, it seemed that we would finish the project early, especially with all the unexpected help we received. Then it appeared that we would not finish at all, when a key part was discovered missing. Ultimately however, with the help of all our Haitian partners (and a dose of Divine Providence), we finished right on time! Thanks be to God!



To learn how you can be a part of Solar School and future solar power mission work in Haiti, see page 5 of this edition.



PASTORS' LETTER

Dear Friends,

Answer this question. Answer quickly. Don't overthink it.
Would you rather belong to a church rich in tradition, or a church rich in freshness, belong to an old church, or a new church?
I can understand people choosing either.

Some people love belonging to a church just getting started, love being in on the ground floor. It's exciting to envision new traditions, to kickstart fresh relationships, to invent new rituals. Since 1998 Christians have started 50,000 new congregations in the United States. People love novel things.

Other people prefer congregations with histories. They relish ritual with roots, long nurtured relationships, and the rhythms of time-tested traditions.

I understand both impulses, but my heart belongs to history. My spirit delights in religious practices shared with our ancestors.

Our congregation's roots were planted in 1873 when a group of Presbyterians began worshipping above a Fort Worth livery stable. Soon, a congregation was officially chartered. Another Presbyterian congregation was chartered not long after. Buildings were built, but not too many years passed before these congregations joined together in one building, with one name.

This means that our congregation is 145 years old. To commemorate the anniversary, and to celebrate God's work throughout our past, we have commissioned a beautiful book to tell our congregation's story. 240 pages long, hardbound, and with lots of photographs, sidebars, and memories, this book will be a great read and a family keepsake. In fact, the Session is providing a copy to every First Pres family. I'll keep you up to date with our progress, but for the moment please know that the History Committee is hard at work, coordinating efforts and details with our author and layout/design artist.

The Committee faced a recent decision; should the book cover our history up to the year 2000, or should it carry forward to the present? In search of a good answer, the Committee wondered what percentage of our members have joined since 2000?

Some will be surprised by the answer. 63% of our members have joined First Pres in the last 18 years. (Our book of history will cover our history up to the present.)

So, back to our question; would you rather belong to a church rich in tradition, or a church rich in freshness, belong to an old church, or to a new church?

Maybe the choice isn't an either/or question, an A or B conundrum. Perhaps there is a way to inherit from a glorious past the values and practices necessary to forge a vibrant and creative future.

When I was a kid my mother had one of those inspirational sayings engraved on a wall mounted plaque. It read, "There are two things we should give our children: one is roots, and the other is wings."

What's true of our parents is true also of the Church of Jesus Christ.

I rejoice that at First Pres, we claim a storied 145-year history of Christian faithfulness, and also that we are a modern, forward looking family of faith.

History or freshness? Tradition or innovation?

At First Pres, we have both. Thanks be to God.

See you at church,

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the AUGUST issue of the Penn Street Letter are due **Wednesday, July 18**. Submissions for the weekly Penn Street Online emailed newsletters are due the Wednesday prior to each week's issue.

Please send to Pam Burkholder at pamb@fpcfw.org or bring by the church office.

FOLLOW US

Do you follow First Presbyterian on social media? If not, find us on the following sites and follow along for photos, reminders, encouragement, and more.



@firstpresfw



@firstpres_fw



@firstpres_fw

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SANCTUARY RENOVATION UPDATES IN PICTURES

Under Construction, Overwhelmed by Blessing

The Sanctuary Renovation project has been underway since early April. Here are some photos of the progress thus far. We give thanks for those working hard on this exciting renovation!



BE INSPIRED...

Below are some upcoming opportunities for being inspired into a life of discipleship through church events in the coming weeks.

Choir as a Spiritual Practice

Singing engages the mind, the heart, and the body in ways that give energy and purpose to life!

Breathing, relaxing the body, reflecting on texts, allowing music to touch our emotions, being part of a community... that's all part of the experience of singing in a choir.

Hear what several current choir members had to say as they reflected on their experiences:

Singing in the Chancel Choir has had a greater impact on my life than just about anything else in the last several years. One voice joined with another and another and another until you have something far greater than the sum of its parts. It is a pleasure to sing with such a talented and dedicated group of singers. (Bob K.)

I grew up singing in choir at FPC, following my mother's footsteps. When I moved back to Fort Worth as an adult, I rejoined for a few years, but work and small children made weekly rehearsals a challenge. Fast forward twenty years or so and decided to come back to choir. I love singing in choir for so many reasons...Singing sacred music is a form of worship that makes me feel engaged, moved, and grateful...The Chancel Choir is an incredible blend of enthusiastic amateurs and gifted professional musicians who never make anyone feel "less than." We sing all kinds of beautiful music. We have lot of fun! (Judith K.)

Most of the time when I am singing with the choir I feel like I am soaring! I often don't want it to end. This is my personal connection to God and the universe and to me. (Sue L.)

I am new to the Fellowship Choir. For me it is the perfect blend of group singing without performance anxiety, fun, musical education, and challenge...Everyone is welcoming, and it is a joy to meet others in the choir. (Ellen P.)

Singing in the choir in church on Sunday connects me with the Spirit in a way nothing else can and gives me the opportunity to praise the One who blessed me with the wonderful gift of music...I've read that when a choir sings, the heartbeats of its members synchronize, I like to believe that's true. (Mary P.)

I have always sung, from 4th grade organized choir through high school, then I took a 6-year college break before I started singing at First Pres. Singing again was a true revelation; like a hole in my heart had been filled...Singing again will be a wake up to your soul, a fulfillment you never thought you needed, and a reminder of enjoyment past. (Ann M.)

I LOVE MUSIC!! I most especially love choral music. I love what happens to "sound" when the choir sings note one of a piece. I'm filled, the room is filled... I have entered "another space." For me the space is spirit speaking. (Mary Margaret F.)

Choir for me is very much a spiritual endeavor. Singing with our choir renews in me God's presence, and rejoins me in my baptism and confirmation...I also am able to feel more deeply the messages of the sermon as it is woven into the service with song and scripture... The beginnings of belonging in a new congregation and choir can be daunting but our choir has been very welcoming... (Valerie K.)

Music and lyrics stir the depths within us...During rehearsals and performances, the choir becomes its own community. And dealing with my musical shortcomings, I understand completely the truth that talents are gifted. I see how blending our voices together, bearing with each other, we produce a unity which is greater than its separate parts. (Jim G.)

Singing in the rain? Fine. Singing in the shower? Even better. Singing in the choir? Now, that is marvelous!

We sing a variety of music, we work hard, and we have fun singing together. Even on busy days when arriving at rehearsal tired, I always leave re-energized and happy. It's inspiring to know that the choir's singing blesses and enhances our church's worship. Choir is joyous! Come join us! (Barbara M.)



First Presbyterian Church offers two adult choirs that welcome new singers into this multi-sensory spiritual practice. You are invited to consider joining an adult choir this fall as an avenue for deepening your spiritual journey. Rehearsals begin Wednesday, August 15.

- The Chancel Choir rehearses Wednesdays from 7 – 8.30 p.m. and sings primarily at the 11 a.m. service.
- The Fellowship Choir rehearses Wednesdays from 6 – 7 p.m. and sings primarily at the 9 a.m. service.
- Several times a year the two choirs combine for special worship offerings. Childcare is available for both choirs.

This fall includes special plans to premiere a newly commissioned anthem when the Sanctuary is rededicated, a fall concert celebrating the newly renovated Sanctuary, and a very special December worship service where the choirs will present the sermon in song.

Several choir members are excited to speak with you about their experience and to answer questions you may have about the Chancel and Fellowship Choirs. For more information, to be put into contact with a current choir member, or to make plans to join a choir, please contact the Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski in the church office. (817.335.1231 or michaelw@fpcfw.org)

ENGAGE THE WORLD...

Below are some ways you are invited to serve others through First Presbyterian Church mission and outreach efforts in the coming weeks.



Help us start stocking up for FPC's annual Christmas Toy Store event coming up December 8 with this Christmas in July Toy Drive! Please bring donations to the tables outside the Great Hall on Sundays, July 8 and 15.

Every December for the past few years, the Mission Outreach Committee of FPC hosts a Christmas Toy Store. At this special "store" parents and guardians may shop for Christmas gifts for their children. This year's event will be held on December 8 and will benefit people connected to FPC ministries through First HAND food and clothing, Formula and Diapers Ministry, and Worship on Wednesdays.

ITEMS NEEDED:

Dolls (18" style is most popular)
V-Tech Toys
Gift Card & Money Donations*

**Please make checks out to FPC with "Christmas Store" in the memo and bring to the main office anytime.*

SOLAR SCHOOL FOR HAITI MISSION TRIPS

Join other FPC members in our solar power mission work in Haiti by attending the next Solar School in partnership with a mission of our synod called Solar Under the Sun at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, October 11-14, 2018.

In collaboration with the Mission Committee of First Presbyterian, FPC members have the opportunity to receive training in partnership development as well as solar panel design and installation for our mission partnerships in Haiti. For those interested participants, the Mission Committee will subsidize a portion of the trip.

Those interested in learning more about Solar School may contact Amy Parker (817.335.1231 or aparker@fpcfw.org) or attend a brief information session on Sunday, August 26 at 12:15 p.m. in Room 237.



Solar panel installation in Haiti, April 2018.

Book People Book Club



On July 9 the book will be *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. This story, originally published in 2009, is set on the Isle of Guernsey during the German occupation of the island during World War II. A movie based on the novel is coming out soon. This is a great summer read.

For information about Book People please contact Elizabeth Johnson Pense at ejpense@me.com.

VBS Music in Worship

The children and volunteers for VBS will be sharing some of the music they learn during the week in the 9 a.m. worship service on Sunday, July 1.

Intro to Handbells Class

If you'd like to learn how to play handbells and see what it would be like to play in a bell choir, there is a class for you in August. The class will meet on Wednesday evenings, August 8, 15, 22, and 29 from 7-8 p.m. in Room 245. For more info or to sign up, please contact Rebecca Sawyer, rsawyer@fpcfw.org or 817-335-1231.

Save the Date: Fall Youth Music Retreat

The Fall Youth Music Retreat will be September 7-9 at Glen Lakes Retreat Center in Glen Rose, Texas. Watch for further details.



Music & Art Camps Still Open!

Spots still remain for Pre-K and Elementary Music & Art Camps at FPC in July.

At FPC Music & Art Camps, children will explore their artistic talents. Your young artists will sing, dance, drum, play bells and bars, and hone their visual arts skills under the tutelage of some of the finest teachers in North Texas. Be prepared for an awesome performance by your child at the end of camp!

Get more information and register at fpcfw.org/summer-camps/

Opportunities to Serve: Music & Arts Camps and Mission on the Move

Volunteer with Music & Arts Camps: Come and have a great experience by volunteering with one of the camps. It will be the highlight of your summer to watch the campers develop their skills in art and music! You are welcome to sign up for a week, a day, or an hour to assist with snacks or lunch time. If you'd like to gain some experience as a beginning audio engineer, we would like to give a bit of training and use you to run sound for our camp programs. Youth and adults are both welcomed as volunteers. Want more info? Contact Rebecca Sawyer, rsawyer@fpcfw.org or 817-335-1231.

Volunteer with Mission on the Move: This summer we will host Mission on the Move for the second year. This program offers 3rd-8th graders the opportunity to be immersed in an urban mission environment focused on a particular need. The dates are July 30 - August 3 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. and this year the theme is Hunger. The week is led by staff members Amy Parker, Eric Varnon and Katie Seelye. Volunteers are needed to help throughout the week. For more information and to volunteer, contact Amy Parker (817.335.1231 or aparker@fpcfw.org).

Faith & Film Class

The Faith & Film summer series continues: Through the month of July we will take a look at the movie, *Son of Man*, with guest speaker Dr. Darren Middleton, Professor of Religion at TCU and the theology of The Simpsons with Michael Waschevski. Join us each Sunday morning at 10 a.m. in Room 235.



Team FPC participated in Joe's Run at Magnolia Green on June 2. Pictured L-R are FPC winners Pat Gordon (3rd place in age group), Brian Hocker (2nd place in age group), and Andrea Frankfield (raffle winner of Texas Ranger tickets.)



CALENDAR

*Below are a few highlighted events in July.
More at fpcfw.org/calendar.*

SUNDAYS IN JULY

- 8 a.m. Worship in Chapel
- 9 a.m. Worship in Great Hall
- 10 a.m. Summer Adult Church School
- 10 a.m. Summer Choir Rehearsal
- 11 a.m. Worship in Great Hall

WEDNESDAYS IN JULY

- 5:30 p.m. Worship On Wednesdays (+ dinner, classes) at Community Crossroads
- 6:30 p.m. Summer Choir Rehearsal

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4

- All Day Church Offices Closed

SUNDAY, JULY 8

- All Day Christmas in July Toy Drive
- All Day 2nd Sunday: Shoes on Sunday
- 2 p.m. Christmas in July Youth Pool Party
- 5 p.m. Southwest Care Team Cook Out & Potluck

MONDAY, JULY 9

- 3 p.m. Room in the Inn begins for Summer

MONDAY, JULY 9 - FRIDAY, JULY 13

- 9 a.m. Pre-K Music & Arts Camp

SUNDAY, JULY 15

- All Day Christmas in July Toy Drive
- All Day 3rd Sunday: Peanut Butter Sunday
- 6:30 p.m. Taize Wholeness & Healing Service

SUNDAY, JULY 15 - FRIDAY, JULY 21

- 8 a.m. Children's Summer Camp at Mo-Ranch

THURSDAY, JULY 19

- 1 p.m. Beacons Birthday Bash

THURSDAY, JULY 19 - SUNDAY, JULY 22

- All Day JHaMS at Austin College

MONDAY, JULY 23 - FRIDAY, JULY 27

- 9 a.m. Elementary Music & Arts Camp

MONDAY, JULY 30 - FRIDAY, AUGUST 3

- 9 a.m. Mission on the Move

JOYS & CONCERNS

Following are the joys and concerns shared as of June 20, 2018 (due to printing deadlines). To respect the privacy of those listed, names are included only when the individuals grant their permission.

Our loving sympathy to...

Family and friends of **Jim Shires**, who died on June 19. Surviving family includes his wife Molly Shires.

Nancy Lynn Scott on the death of her brother, Warren W. Scott, on June 4 in Portland, Oregon.

Steve and Laura Stackhouse on the death of his father, Robert C. Stackhouse, on May 27 in Norfolk, VA. Other surviving FPC family: grandchildren, **Ellie Stackhouse** and **Robbie Stackhouse**.

Our loving thoughts and prayers are with...

Paula Robertson and **Judy Gasch**, who are recovering from surgery or injury. **Roger Parsons**, **Jane Watson**, **Rush Hart**, **Marilyn Wilson**, **Vera Kendall**, **Phyllis Propes**, **Emma Coley**, **Marjorie Lewis**, **Corinna Nation**, **Lisa Shiner**, **Jacquitta White**, **Marge Shiner**, **Elizabeth Bean**, **Frances Blake**, **Nancy Nelson**, and **Dalia Scott**, who are dealing with illness or undergoing treatment.

Our caring prayers for extended family include...

Bill (brother of **Marilyn Love**), **Glenda Burger** (sister of **Vance Laminack**), **Janet Laminack** (cousin of **Julie Sphar** and **Vance Laminack**), **John DeMore** (son-in-law of **June Sprott**), **Lisa Koenig** (niece of **Clark Williams**), **Kathy Kline** (**Maxine Kruse's** daughter), **Marty Kinard** (**Larry and Bettye Kinard's** daughter-in-law), and **Susan Chenault** (**Frances Chenault's** daughter).

Prayers for peace in our world, for the safety of **Nathan Gunter** (**Russell and Vivian Norment's** nephew) who is stationed in Korea. Also for the safety of **Diego A. Saldivar**, who is serving in the US Navy; Diego is the son of **Becky and Rene Saldivar**.

Our congratulations and best wishes to...

Adam and Krista Gern on the birth of **Everett Lee Daniel Gern**, on May 18. He joins big sister, **Addie**. Other proud FPC family include grandfather **Rob Kopp**, and aunt **Natalie Kopp**.

So whether you eat
or drink or whatever
you do, do it for the
glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

**COMING
THIS FALL!**



FELLOWSHIP
Dinner Groups



THE penn street LETTER

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PERIODICALS POSTMASTER:

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Coastal Intergenerational Mission Trip



In June, 33 youth and adults participated in our Hurricane Harvey Relief Mission Trip to the Texas Coast. The group spent the entire week working on two houses (replacing siding) that were heavily damaged by Harvey. It was very hard and meaningful work as Aransas County was ground zero for this devastating hurricane. Parkway Presbyterian Church in Corpus Christi graciously hosted our group by providing lodging in their youth center and fellowship hall.