

# FIRST PRESS



FALL 2022

[FIRSTPRESWC.COM](http://FIRSTPRESWC.COM)

# A Note from Pastor Caroline

Dear First Pres Family,

The heat seemed to break just a bit this morning, enough that the short walk between car and church didn't feel like being inserted into an oven. As I made my way toward the building, a single line of spider web, spun overnight, spanned the path and caught me with its sticky, nearly invisible fibers. Something so delicate, barely visible, that had the power to pause, to connect me to tree and plant and all manner of crawling things going about their morning business of weaving life out of a tomb. It made me wonder about all of those webs being woven around us all the time, those connecting lines we catch glimpses of when the light is just right. Perhaps the whole purpose of church is to tune our eyes to see, our ears to hear, the webs of grace that are being woven around us at every moment.

When people ask "why church?" my answer always seems to fall into something to do with connection: connection to Creator, to Christ, to one another. In a world that prizes control and security, we are a people who take an almost stubborn pride in our interdependence. The first Reformers reminded the faithful that they didn't need leaders who possessed special powers to know God, but they did need one another. Worship, communion, baptism, passing Christ's peace – all invitations to gather, to take the idea of God and make it burst into the present in soft wrinkled hands and gleefully displayed loose teeth. It was within my church family that I learned not only the books of the Bible but also that adults could hold my doubts and questions, and where, a few decades later, my son developed passions for both organ music and Freddie Mercury (thanks to church adults who have varied but impeccable artistic taste). In a world where everything is clamoring for our loyalty and attention, it is church where I find the connections to people and values that I want to nurture.

As we look ahead to the Fall and beginning of the church's program year, you'll see many opportunities to connect. There are Bible and book studies, mission projects, engagement activities for children and youth, and chances to share a meal with one another. We're continuing groups that have sustained energy such as the Craft Beer Group, Wednesday Lunches, and the Young Justice Builders; bringing back old favorites like Wednesday dinners and Trick or Treat; and starting some new initiatives, among them an intergenerational bell choir and ministry team focused on supporting our neighbors at 122 W. Miner. We are also welcoming some new staff members to our team. On any given weekday, the church building is filled with sewing groups, Presbyterian Women working on the clothing ministry, or fencers leaping across Fellowship Hall. At today's Wednesday Lunch we ran out of food and had to make an emergency pizza call while the women of Denney Reyburn mounted a convincing argument in favor of moving the Thursday morning Bible Study to their apartment building. "We don't always come on Sundays," they said, "but this is our church too." (Lessons from today: prepare more food and never attempt to argue with a group of determined women!)

In the pages to follow you'll also receive an update from our Pastoral Nominating Committee. Two years can feel like a long time to be in a chapter of transition (especially when it coincides with a pandemic!). While I'm impatient to meet the person who will become our next Head of Staff, I also have a lingering suspicion that this season in our church's life was not an aberration, but rather God's "Plan A" for First Pres. To embrace this moment is not to foist a silver lining onto a difficult situation, but rather to, like Sarah, laugh with disbelief and delight at the realization that maybe it was this absurd confluence of forces that God

intended for us all along. I don't subscribe to the idea that what is difficult necessarily makes one stronger. It can just as easily break us. But I also think that it takes times of disruption and vulnerability to recognize what we're made of, and we, as it turns out, are made of very strong stuff.

Thank you for the gift of serving as your pastor during this time. It is a joy to learn from you, to work alongside you, and to share this amazing church we call home. I can't wait to see you all in September!

In Christ,  
Pastor Caroline

## Kickoff Sunday - September 11

Join us on **Sunday, September 11** for Kickoff Sunday. We'll be celebrating the start of the church's program year with a full 9:00 am service of brass, choir, Sunday School for children, and Pastor Emeritus Bill Hess in the pulpit. Stay afterward for coffee and pastries, followed by a celebratory 10:42 worship service. Bible studies and the children's music ensembles begin meeting that week and will continue throughout the fall. We look forward to seeing you!

## New School Year

Sunday morning children's programming resumes on Sunday, September 11 with Sunday School during the 9:00 service and Kids Connect during the 10:42 service. Both programs are geared for children ages 4 – 5th grade. The nursery is open during both services for children 3 and younger.

### **Sunday School during the 9:00 service**

- Children begin the hour in service with their families and are invited out following the children's message.
- Teachers gather children in Fellowship Hall and then divide into two classrooms: one for preschool – 1st graders and a second room for 2nd-5th graders.
- Both classrooms will use Godly Play lessons that invite children to hear and explore Bible stories in a contemplative manner. The beautifully written and engaging curriculum teaches children to seek God in the stories and grow in their sense of the Holy Spirit.

### **Kids Connect during the 10:42 service**

- Children begin the service in the Sanctuary with their families and are invited out for a lesson shortly before the sermon.
- Teachers meet with children in the Chapel to explore and play with the day's Bible story.

We're looking forward to a great new year of learning and growing together with our youngest disciples! Parents are encouraged to sign up for the children's programs they plan to participate in through the sign-up tab on the website.

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# Fall Adult Studies

There's something for everyone if you're looking to get involved with an adult study group this fall, from in-depth Bible study to contemplative conversation and practice to fellowship and service groups. Contact the leader names listed below if you would like more information.

## **Sunday Night & Thursday Morning Bible Study**

Start at the beginning this fall with an 8-week Bible study on Genesis. The first book of the Old Testament weaves together history and theology with the stories of the Scriptures' most intriguing characters. Together we will explore the book's origins, significance, and why this ancient text continues to speak to our contemporary struggles and hopes. The class will be offered two times per week: Sundays on Zoom at 7:00 p.m. and Thursdays in person at the Denney Reyburn apartment building (two blocks from church) at 10:30 a.m. To sign up visit the Sign-up tab on the church's website or email Pastor Caroline at [ccupp@firstpreswc.com](mailto:ccupp@firstpreswc.com).



## **Christian Faith & Issues**

This class will resume meeting on Sunday mornings in person this fall. Class sessions will take place on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month starting at 10:45 a.m. beginning on September 18. The first meeting of the month will generally be a current event discussion. Other planned topics include fair voting districts, social justice issues, racial inequality, environmental changes, and how our Christian faith might inform our response. November's schedule will be slightly different, as we welcome back Jeff Heim to the class to lead a two-week series on the History of Discrimination on Sundays November 6 & 13. Contact Dan Campbell ([campbelldt@verizon.net](mailto:campbelldt@verizon.net)) for more information.

## **Wednesday Night Study**

This fall, the group will study the Lord's Prayer based on *Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus* over Zoom from 6:30 – 7:30 on Wednesday nights. The author of this book contributed to Sharon Browning's sermon earlier this summer unpacking the Aramaic translations of the Beatitudes. This study will incorporate both group discussion and individual body prayers to deepen our engagement with the Biblical text and will begin on Wednesday, September 28. To sign up to participate, go the Sign-up tab on the church's website or email Sara Pantazes at [spantazes@firstpreswc.com](mailto:spantazes@firstpreswc.com).

## **Additional Women's Studies**

Spiritual Connections meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 6:30 pm. This fall they are reading and discussing *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis.

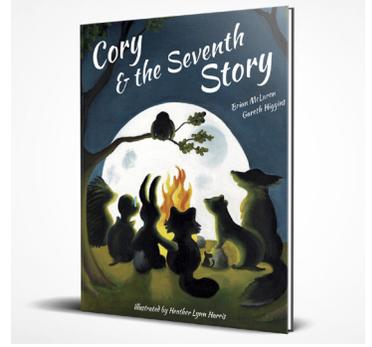
Plans are also in the works for a weekday women's study later this fall. More details will be shared in the coming weeks.

## **Presbyterian Women Circles & Men's Groups**

Small groups are a powerful way to grow in relationships with other people and to deepen your own faith. Presbyterian Women Circles meet on a monthly basis and our three men's small groups meet weekly for bible study, fellowship and service. Details on each group's meeting times and their fall studies can be found at [www.firstpreswc.com/adult-groups](http://www.firstpreswc.com/adult-groups).

# Young Justice Builders Club

This year, Young Justice Builders will spend four sessions reading and exploring the ideas of *Cory & the Seventh Story* by Brian McClaren and Gareth Higgins. This modern-day fable tells six familiar stories of how humans have behaved throughout history, stories about how we have treated one another and the less than desirable outcomes. The seventh story is presented by a Jesus-figure who proposes another way of living, one based on open-heartedness toward others and proclaims, “We have more than enough in the story of love.”



This program is for elementary-aged children and their parents. The first two sessions will be held on September 25 and November 13 from noon – 1:00 p.m. Contact Sara Pantazes ([spantazes@firstpreswc.com](mailto:spantazes@firstpreswc.com)) for more information.

## Bucket School Staffing Update

A new school year always brings some elements of change, and there is one significant piece of news to share with you. After serving as the Preschool Director over the 2021-2022 school year, Dr. Marissa Truong let us know that she is planning to step down from the role to focus on her children and tutoring practice. Dr. T brought fresh ideas and a new perspective to the Bucket School, and she has been a pleasure to work with.

Fortunately we have a talented team of teachers at the Bucket School, and with Marissa’s recommendation and the Personnel Committee’s enthusiastic support, Jen Rosenberg has accepted the role of Preschool Director. Jen’s talent for teaching, warmth, and long commitment to the Bucket School made her a natural fit for the role and we could not be more excited to have her serve in this new capacity.



Please join us in thanking Marissa and welcoming Jen to her new role. The Bucket School is in good hands for all that lies ahead.

## The Bucket School

The Bucket School is gearing up for another great year! The teachers are returning on Tuesday, August 30 and our students will arrive for their first day on Friday, September 9. This year our teachers and students will be working hard learning letters and numbers as well as making new friends and even doing some community service projects.

If anyone is looking for a preschool program, we still have openings in our 3 day 4’s class, our 3 day 3’s class and in January we will have a class for children aged 2 years and 7 months. Info can be found at [firstpreswc.com/bucket-school](http://firstpreswc.com/bucket-school). Please spread the word about our program.

Jen Rosenberg  
Director, The Bucket School



# VBS Recap

First Pres kids had a fantastic time during our Discovery on Adventure Island VBS this summer. They spent every Sunday morning in June and July learning Bible stories, playing with our signal verse, enjoying delicious snacks and dancing with joy. Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make it happen!



# Summer Music Camp 2022

This year's Summer Music Camp was held from August 1-3. Fifteen kids from First Pres and the greater community participated in this music education program. The presenters were Dr. Marci Major (singing), David Sabella (percussion) and Sandor Kadar (piano and organ). Sara, Eric, and Elizabeth from staff made sure the kids had fun during game times while volunteers prepared the food and refreshments for the snack time.



# New Music Group at FPC

Want to help motivate and support the next generation of Bell Ringers for worship? We are recruiting new bell ringers ages 6 – 12 and adult bell ringer mentors to join our new program, Miner Street Bell Connections, under the direction of Marci Major. MSBC will be an intergenerational group where each child is assigned an adult mentor. The rehearsals will be on Wednesday nights from 6:30 -7:15 pm. If interested in this new music group, please contact Marci or Sandor.

# Children's Choir

Children's Choir rehearsals will resume on Wednesday, September 14. Children rehearse from 5:15-6:15 every week, balancing song rehearsal with music games and time for devotion and prayer. This fall they will be preparing to sing in 9 am worship in October and November and to contribute to the Christmas Concert on December 4. This choir is targeted for children aged 4 through 5th grade, although older children are welcome to participate. For more information, please contact Sara or Marci.

# Concerts at First Pres

The first Column Classics concert of the new program year will be at **4:00 p.m. on October 23**. It will feature two highly talented students from WCU, Braden Mulcahy and Reid Simmons. They will be presenting a program for saxophone and organ/piano. It will surely be an interesting musical event.

The annual Candlelight Christmas Concerts have been scheduled for 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. on December 4. This event will feature a variety of music styles and a large number of musicians from both First Pres and the West Chester area. Seat reservations will be required in order to avoid sanctuary overcrowding.

# New Member Class

First Pres will host a New Members Class on Sunday, October 9 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.. If you are interested in joining or finding out more about membership, please sign up with Elizabeth Hess ([ehess@firstpreswc.com](mailto:ehess@firstpreswc.com)).

# Trick-or-Treat

For over 15 years, First Pres has hosted a community Trick or Treat where we welcome the community to “trick or treat” at doors throughout the building. We had to take a break during covid, but it's back for 2022, the last weekend in October! Stay tuned to the weekly enews for more details – we'll welcome volunteers to donate candy as well as answer doors during the event. If you'd like to be on the Ministry Team that helps plan this specific event, please reach out to Elizabeth Hess ([ehess@firstpreswc.com](mailto:ehess@firstpreswc.com)).

# Advent Workshop: Save The Date

Pencil in the date of Sunday, Nov. 28 at 4 p.m. for this year's Advent Workshop. We'll have fresh wreaths to decorate and take home, as well as a “winter workshop” for our younger friends to make some gifts for loved ones. More details to come!

# Chancel Choir Auditions

The Chancel Choir starts rehearsing for the new season on September 8. The rehearsals are from 7:30 until 9:00 p.m. on Thursday nights. If you are interested in joining, please contact Sandor Kadar, Director of Music ([skadar@firstpreswc.com](mailto:skadar@firstpreswc.com)).

## PNC Update

The PNC has been actively communicating with lead pastor candidates throughout the summer. As the Fall approaches we're still in the process of finding the right person to lead our congregation. It has been gratifying to hear how complimentary candidates are about the congregation, church mission, and staff. Candidates appreciate learning about the congregation in action, doing great things even without a head of staff. We are clearly well-positioned to attract top candidates based on our church itself. Thank you for your patience and continued prayers. We are confident that the one whom God is calling will make their way to us in good time!

- PNC Co-Chairs Deb Shryock and Chris Menan

## Wednesday Lunches

What started as a tentative Lenten experiment has grown into a vibrant weekly ministry. Each Wednesday we welcome dozens of our neighbors into Fellowship Hall for a delicious hot meal, served at long tables filled with laughter and conversation. The main course is catered by local businesses with salads and side dishes made by church members and volunteers. Those who come to eat bring what they can to share: homemade empanadas, bags of fresh donuts, or carefully collected beads to string into wearable pieces of art. People come to lunch for all kinds of reasons: some are unhoused, some were, many struggle with health challenges, and some are simply longing for laughter, warmth, and connection. Over the months a community has formed around these lunches: a team of regular volunteers facilitates each week and long-time attendees serve as greeters and hosts for newcomers. People trade information on where to find housing and jobs, and invite one another to attend church services.

Please consider joining us on an upcoming Wednesday between 11:30 and 1:00, or email Pastor Caroline to contribute to the ministry. Salads and fruit are always welcome, as are granola bars and water bottles.

Please also consider patronizing Lorenzo's Steaks on Market Street or ordering a meal from Dragonfly Catering. Both of these businesses contribute to the meal each week, and we've grown fond not only of their amazing food but also their kind and generous staff. Thank you for all you do to support this ministry!

## Dinner and Worship

This fall we'll be offering a dinner on **Wednesdays, Sept. 21, Oct. 19 and Nov. 16**. We'll gather in the Social Hall at 6:15 for dinner, and then join together for a worship service in the Chapel from 7-7:30 pm. The dinner menu and sign up information will be publicized the weeks prior to each dinner. All ages are welcome!

# Youth Ministry

This summer has been full of fun for our middle and high school students. Our high schoolers traveled twelve hours down to Hilton Head, SC for a week-long conference at the beach, our middle schoolers went hiking and had their own beach day, and everyone was invited to a Phillies Game at Citizens Bank Park. In addition, there are two more events, a high school beach day and a day of swimming at Guppy Gulch, before the students head back to school.



The youth ministry season starts back up on Kickoff Sunday (September 11). Youth Group will happen on Sunday afternoons from 4:00-5:30 p.m., middle school Bible study will happen on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m., and high school Bible study is back on Wednesday nights from 7:00-8:30 p.m. If you have a middle or high school student in your life, we'd love to connect with them. If you have any questions about the youth ministry at First Pres, reach out to our Youth Director, Eric Hankins ([ehankins@firstpreswc.com](mailto:ehankins@firstpreswc.com)).

# First Crew Mission Trip

## Join us to assist Kentucky tornado victims, October 23 – October 28

This year, First Crew will travel to Kentucky to assist persons in need after the devastating December 10, 2021 tornado. The dates of our trip are Sunday, October 23 – Friday, October 28. Our long-time partner, Fuller Center Disaster Rebuilders, has already set up their infrastructure team in Kentucky and we will once again coordinate with them for our work locations. This group of tornados was particularly destructive, one of which traveled a total of 165 miles from Woodland, TN to Falls of Rough, Kentucky. There were 81 fatalities and more than 650 people injured. The estimated cost of recovery is more than \$3.9 billion. The main qualification is your interest in helping others in need. Fuller Center supplies both materials and tools for the assigned tasks, as well as supplying a manager to oversee the project. Each year we have about an equal number of men and women participating. If you are interested in learning more about this mission opportunity to serve others, please contact Jim Serum at [jwserum@gmail.com](mailto:jwserum@gmail.com) or 610-793-1920.



# Transition Update

As we move into the fall season, our transition work continues. Our three Transition Objectives continue to evolve, including having two of our apartments rented through the voucher program, with a third in process; administrative staffing and processes are being streamlined; and a refreshed approach to stewardship prepared for the fall.

In our visioning work to determine what is important in our ministry (survey and congregational visioning meeting) members highlighted quality relationships as something they appreciated about our church and something that they want to deepen. As we move into the fall, staff and Session will be focused on this area, creating opportunities for members to explore creating connections with each other.

Session will be reviewing progress on all of our transition objectives this fall and determining updated goals. Please hold this work in prayer as our leaders discern where God is leading us for the coming year.

## 122 Miner Street Apartments

We have good news that our third new neighbor is scheduled to move into a one-bedroom apartment at the end of August. This is pending approval from the County and passing inspection. The apartment was updated quite a bit, the renovation managed by Joe Schorn. Once the move-in is completed, the apartment complex will be fully rented! Catherine, in the third floor 2-bedroom apartment and Jenn, in the second floor 1 bedroom, reside happily in their new home. Many thanks to Friends Association for being our partner in finding neighbors for us!

## Welcome David Teager

We are delighted to welcome David Teager as our new Office Administrator. David joins the First Presbyterian staff after a career as a chemist in the world of pharmaceuticals. His longest stint in that ever-changing world was as a scientist for the Clinton Health Access Initiative, where he worked to reduce the cost of life-saving HIV and malaria drugs for patients in the developing world. This job also gave him some interesting travel opportunities, with South Africa, Tanzania, India, Brazil, and China among places visited. He is a longtime member of First & Central Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware, where he most recently served as the interim Program Administrator during a time of staff transition. An elder of the PC-USA, he has also served on committees and commissions of New Castle Presbytery. David and his husband also sing in the Chancel Choir there. They live in Garnet Valley, Pennsylvania, where they enjoy cooking and gardening, with a property showcasing over 500 different hostas and nearly 30 Japanese maples.



# Wednesday Nights

## (Kicks Off Wed. Sept. 14!)

- 5:15 – 6:15: Children's Choir Rehearsal
- 5:30 – 6:30: Worship Band Rehearsal
- 6:30 – 7:15: Miner Street Bell Connections
- 6:30 – 7:30: Adult Study over Zoom
- 7:00 – 8:30: High School Bible Study
- 7:30 – 9:00: Chancel Ringers Rehearsal

# Membership Updates

## In Memoriam

- Elizabeth H. Gilchrist, member of First Presbyterian Church from June 6, 1965 to June 6, 2022.

## The sympathy and prayers of the congregation are extended to:

- The family and friends of Elizabeth H. Gilchrist.
- Kip, Lisa, Lindsey and Elise Volkman and family in the death of Lisa's mother and Lindsey and Elise's grandmother.

## Baptisms:

- Leo Daniel Laquintano, born September 11, 2021, son of Marc and Jamie Laquintano.

## Births:

- Aiden Parker McClure, born May 9, 2022, son of Justin and Mandy McClure, grandson of Dale and Terri McClure.

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

	July Actual	July Budget	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Full Year Budget
Income	\$88,906	\$81,150	\$643,997	\$616,335	\$1,094,775
Expenses	\$86,432	\$124,306	\$525,635	\$623,375	\$1,094,775
Difference	\$2,474	(\$43,156)	\$118,362	(\$7,040)	\$0

FIRST PRES

# CONTACT

## Executive Pastor

Rev. Caroline Cupp ([ccupp@firstpreswc.com](mailto:ccupp@firstpreswc.com))

## Program Staff

Director of Music:

Sándor Kádár ([skadar@firstpreswc.com](mailto:skadar@firstpreswc.com))

Assistant Organist:

Peyton Cole ([peytoncolemusic@outlook.com](mailto:peytoncolemusic@outlook.com))

Technical Support Coordinator

Nolan Prochnau ([nprochnau@firstpreswc.com](mailto:nprochnau@firstpreswc.com))

Children's Choir Director:

Marci Major ([mmajor@wcupa.edu](mailto:mmajor@wcupa.edu))

Director of Engagement:

Elizabeth Hess ([ehess@firstpreswc.com](mailto:ehess@firstpreswc.com))

Director of Faith Formation:

Sara Pantazes ([spantazes@firstpreswc.com](mailto:spantazes@firstpreswc.com))

Preschool Director:

Jen Rosenberg ([jrosenberg@firstpreswc.com](mailto:jrosenberg@firstpreswc.com))

Director of Youth & Contemporary Ministries:

Eric Hankins ([ehankins@firstpreswc.com](mailto:ehankins@firstpreswc.com))

## Church Office

Director of Operations:

Jeff Somers ([jsomers@firstpreswc.com](mailto:jsomers@firstpreswc.com))

Office Manager:

Karen Goldstein ([kgoldstein@firstpreswc.com](mailto:kgoldstein@firstpreswc.com))

Office Administrator:

David Teager ([dteager@firstpreswc.com](mailto:dteager@firstpreswc.com))

Interim Office Administrator:

Claire Kramer ([ckramer@firstpreswc.com](mailto:ckramer@firstpreswc.com))

Wedding & Funeral Coordinator:

Gretchen Huebner ([ghuebner@firstpreswc.com](mailto:ghuebner@firstpreswc.com))

Custodian:

Willy Oliveras (*contact church office for requests*)

[firstpreswc.com/live](http://firstpreswc.com/live)

# FALL KICKOFF

SEPTEMBER 11, 2022

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