

AUGUST 2026

FPC NEWSLETTER

Deeper in Christ, Further into the World



BACK HOME AND LOOKING FORWARD

By Scott Graham

Interim Senior Pastor

Kristina and I have just come back from our almost annual trip to northern Michigan, where we enjoyed a Pastor family camp on the shores of Lake Huron. We met with colleagues, some of whom we have laughed, cried, and prayed with for over 30 years. We had a few days of cooler weather, but finished by dodging the smoke-filled air coming from wildfires in Ontario. Good to be away, but very good to be back home!

Fall is upon us, and a very full and exciting season approaches. Here are a few events to be aware of:

Following worship on August 2, we give thanks and say a bittersweet “goodspeed” to Daniel and Maegan Croskrey. Daniel will be the Director of Family Ministry at Covenant Presbyterian in Monroe. We will miss them dearly, but are happy for the greater opportunities in ministry that await them both.

Also on August 2, we are offering an update from the EPC General Assembly held in June. Significant discussion and decisions were made in the area of officer ordination standards that have generated some questions and concerns. I will provide a detailed report, hopefully accompanied by some of our Ruling Elders who attended. I believe the thoughtful, biblically based conclusions reached by the assembly have strengthened our “gatekeeping” for ordination, and I look forward to sharing this information with you.

August 9 brings us back to our three Sunday services, and a full plate of Sunday school offerings including a

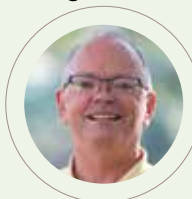
new class open to everyone but aimed at leadership development for our current and potential Elders and Deacons. We will have an excellent group of Pastors and Elders leading this, along with our other top-notch offerings at 10:10 am.

August 16 will bring our new sermon series on *The Gospel of Luke*. Luke’s approach of paying special attention to both Jews and Gentiles, men and women, as well as people of wealth and modest means makes this a gospel where we can easily find ourselves. More importantly, it’s a great series to invite friends and neighbors to worship that may not have a church home or a relationship with Jesus Christ yet. Pray and consider who the Lord may be calling you to bring along to FPC this year!

Finally, pat a Pastoral Search Committee member on the back the next time you see them. They have looked at over 120 different candidate’s sermons and had discussions with a significant number of pastors, some of which are ongoing. Let’s continue to be diligent in prayer for them, knowing that the Lord provides his wisdom as we look to him (Colossians 1:9).

In the meantime, I am honored and grateful to be your pastor for this season. God’s presence in the “wilderness” times of our life together allow our roots of faith to strike the living water of his faithfulness.

Yours in Christ,



AUGUST CALENDAR

2	Directory Help Desk
2	10.30 am Summer Worship
2	Kingdom Kids Teacher Training
2	General Assembly Recap
2	Farewell to the Croskreys
6	Prime Time Luau Lunch
7	Sock Hop
9	Resume Three Services
9	Sunday School Resumes
9	Confirmation Parents' Mtg.
14	Confirmation Lock-in
16	Youth Ministry Parents' Mtg.
20	W.M. Romans Study Starts
23	Youth Group Resumes
23	Elementary Communion Class

UPCOMING SEPTEMBER EVENTS

6	Combined Worship at 10.30 am
20	Discover First Class Begins

SUNDAY SCHOOL STARTS AGAIN!

August is here, and for First Presbyterian, that means our normal rhythms return. In particular, we resume our three service worship schedule, and our adult Sunday schools will welcome everyone back! On August 9, our classes will once again offer great teaching that is geared toward growing your heart and mind in Christ. Here's an overview of each class:

Perspectives Class:

Kevin McCarter's class, Perspectives, is focusing on the Covenants of God. This class gathers immediately following the 7.45 am Chapel Communion service. The class motto concerning the Scriptures is, "Many facets, one light. Many voices, one song." With many new people visiting the 7.45 am service, come join Perspectives to get connected! Join them in Education Building room 202.

The following classes meet at 10.10 am directly following the 9 am Contemporary service.

Crossroads Class:

The Crossroads class, led by Dan Zito and Vince Gilcrease, wants us to know Jesus better. They want to reinforce, reenergize, renew, and even restore our relationship with him by using the beautifully written book, *Rabboni*, by W. Phillip Keller. The big change for this class is its location. After years of being in the Education Building, Crossroads will meet in the Sanctuary Building room 219.

Journeys Class:

The Journeys class is taking a break from meeting this fall. Shawn Wilson and Charlie Daigle have done an outstanding job of teaching and leading but will be using their gifts in other ways to teach and serve. All of those who have loved this class know how grateful we are for each of them!

Leader Training Class:

Scott Graham is leading a new class in room 202 of the Education Building. Scott's desire is to have well-trained leadership. He will be taking our elders, deacons, and anyone who would like to join in, through our EPC Leader's Training Guide. He'll cover key Reformed doctrine and discover how it presently shapes our church in beautiful ways.

Kingdom Builders Class:

Ryan Dickerson's class, Kingdom Builders, will study the book of Hebrews. This class is popular for good reasons; excellent teaching and rich fellowship are found weekly, and they welcome you to join them. Join them in Sanctuary Building room 220.

Any and all of these classes is eager to see the Lord at work and would love to have you join in!

TAMARISK BUILDING UPDATES

Good things are happening at the newly purchased Tamarisk Building!

Over the past several weeks, we've completed an important project by repairing and replacing the building's roof. While a new roof isn't the most exciting thing to look at, it's one of those behind-the-scenes improvements that helps protect the property and prepares it for years of future use. We're grateful to see this important work finished.

Thank you for your continued prayers, encouragement, and support as we continue investing in spaces that serve our church and our community. We look forward to sharing more updates as progress continues!

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL



CAN WE SEE YOU?

As we prepare to welcome a new pastor, one of the best things we can do is make sure our church family directory is complete. A current photo and up-to-date contact information will help our new pastor—and all of us—put names with faces and stay connected.

Our church directory is now available through the Church Center app. Upload your photo and update your information. Once you tell us it's ok to share your information, other members can contact you. It's easy to do yourself from your phone or computer. But if technology isn't your favorite thing, we're happy to help! Stop by the Directory Help Desk at the Connection Center after worship. Or give the office a call and a staff member will help you. There are currently no plans for a printed church directory. Our online Church Center directory will be our church's official directory, so now is the perfect time to get connected.

Let's fill our directory with smiling faces and be ready to warmly welcome our next pastor!



ISRAEL TRIP PLANNED FOR JANUARY 2027

Plans are moving forward for our church trip to Israel scheduled for January 12–21, 2027. We are excited about the opportunity to experience the places where the events of Scripture unfolded and to deepen our faith together through this unforgettable journey.

As always, we will continue to monitor conditions as the trip approaches and make decisions with the well-being of our group in mind. If you'd like to learn more, or express your interest, please contact Darin Travis (darin@fpcbr.org).



200TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PLANS ARE UNDERWAY!

As First Presbyterian Church looks ahead to celebrating 200 years of God's faithfulness, exciting plans are coming together for this once-in-a-generation milestone. Throughout 2027, we'll remember God's faithfulness in our past while looking forward with hope to the future he has for our church.

Our anniversary celebration begins even before 2027 arrives! Starting with the First Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2026, our congregation will journey together through a special daily devotional, preparing our hearts as we reflect on two centuries of God's work through First Presbyterian Church.

In April 2027, we'll gather for a 200th Anniversary Celebration Weekend featuring special worship services, opportunities to reconnect with friends old and new, and a festive gathering for the whole family. It will be a joyful weekend of worship, fellowship, laughter, and thanksgiving as we celebrate God's faithfulness across generations.

There is much more to come, so watch for future announcements as we count down to this historic celebration. We can't wait to celebrate 200 years of God's grace—and the exciting future he has in store for FPC.

PASTOR SEARCH UPDATE

To date, the Pastor Search Committee has considered approximately 120 potential candidates. For most candidates, three to four committee members have listened to two or three sermons, averaging 35 minutes each. Altogether, this represents approximately 175 hours of sermon content and more than 600 collective hours of committee review.

From that initial work, preliminary interviews have been conducted with several candidates and multiple rounds of deeper conversations with a smaller group. A presentation at the EPC General Assembly in June was very well received, and we were encouraged by the thoughtful response and support of respected leaders throughout the denomination.

Most importantly, the Committee continues to experience a remarkable sense of unity, peace, and presence of the Holy Spirit. Confidence is high that the Lord is actively at work in this process and remains fully in control of both the timing and the outcome. At each meeting, time is set aside for earnest prayer—for the person God may be preparing to call, for the life and future of our church, and for wisdom, humility, and discernment as this important work continues.

MORE THAN CONQUERORS WOMEN'S ROMANS STUDY

Often called Paul's greatest letter, the book of Romans has shaped the faith of believers for nearly 2,000 years. R.C. Sproul described it as Paul's "fullest, grandest, most comprehensive statement of the gospel." It gives us an honest look at the reality of our sin while lifting our eyes to the breathtaking grace of God in Jesus Christ. It reminds us that our hope is found in the perfect righteousness of Christ, freely given to all who trust him.

Join Women's Ministry this fall as we journey through this incredible letter together. As we study Romans, we'll discover not only the beauty and depth of the gospel, but also the freedom, joy, assurance, and hope that belong to everyone who is in Christ. May God use this study to deepen our faith, transform our hearts, and draw us to love him more.

Bible study begins the week of August 17. There are three options to participate:

Tuesdays | 8 am
FPC Parlor
Childcare available by request.

Wednesdays | 6.30 pm
At the home of Suzie Thompson
13 Stones Throw

Thursdays | 9.30 am
FPC Education Building Room 202

SAVE THE DATE

More Than Conquerors: Women's Retreat on Romans 8

Friday, October 2 | 6–8.30pm
Dinner included
At the home of Sherry Tucker
15610 Philemon Thomas Court

Saturday, October 3 | 8.30–12pm
Breakfast included. Childcare offered.
In Dunham Chapel

\$20/person (\$25 on September 28) Registration coming soon.



2026-2027 CIRCLE STUDY: HEBREWS, AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL

Join one of our Women's Ministry Circles this year as we study *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, by Michael Kruger. Together, we'll discover why Christ is infinitely better than anything this world offers—and why, when our hearts are prone to drift, he alone is the anchor that holds us fast.

Circles provide meaningful fellowship through a cohesive Scripture-based book study and time of prayer. Circles meet monthly from September through May, but you can join anytime.

Email jaime@fpcbr.org for more information or visit fpcbr.org for Circle meeting days and times.



IT'S TIME TO GET "BACK TO SCHOOL" AT MCKINLEY ELEMENTARY!

Our ministry at McKinley Elementary School has been active for almost 40 years—what a testament to our church and the willingness of our members to serve! There are several opportunities for us at our adopted school this year including serving as a Teacher Encourager, Reading Friend, Storytime Reader or helping with events throughout the year.

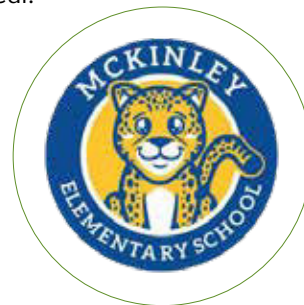
We have 80 teachers and staff that are hoping to be adopted by an Encourager. Encouragers support their teacher during the year through prayer, notes, emails, calls, or a small gift each month. Items can be left at the church for delivery. It's an easy way to make a huge impact on folks that are working the "frontlines" and appreciate that someone is thinking of them.

We are also recruiting Reading Friends who work one-on-one with a below-reading-level student in kindergarten through second grade. The commitment is to work with a student at least twice a month for 30 minutes each time. Training is provided through Volunteers in Public Schools and it's exciting to see students' progress with this one-on-one help that makes such a difference.

Our pre-k through 2nd grade teachers would love to have a Classroom Storytime Reader come into their classes once a month to read to their students. The kids love to hear stories from their special reader and, by the end of the year, you are almost considered a celebrity when you enter the classroom!

We will continue to collect much needed school supplies. Items needed can be found on a list at the Connection Center and by going on Amazon to our list: <https://a.co/01qCrudB>. Supplies will be sent directly to the church for sorting and delivery to the school.

For more information or to sign up for any of these opportunities, visit the Connection Center each Sunday beginning August 16, or contact Laura Shaw at laura@fpcbr.org or 387.0617. Let's get back to school and help make a difference in the lives of our neighbors just two miles from our church!



OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

BECOME A MENTOR!
DO YOU HAVE 1 HOUR
TO GIVE?

ONE STUDENT. ONE MENTOR. TOGETHER.

To learn more about
Kids Hope USA,
connect with Bonnie Adams
(bonnie@fpcbr.org) or sign up
through Church Center.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Attention Parents of Rising 1st Graders!

Parents of rising first graders are invited to join their children for their final Children's Church on August 2. Please accompany your child to Dunham Chapel when dismissed during the greeting.

Put On Your Blue Suede Shoes!

Get ready to twist, jive, and rock around the clock at the Sock Hop! Children's Ministry invites our families to a fun-filled evening of music, dancing, games, and sweet treats. Dinner will be served. Dress in your favorite 50s-inspired outfits. Our Sock Hop is Friday, August 7, 6–7.30 pm. Registration closes on Sunday, August 2! Scan the code to register on Church Center or visit fpcbr.org.



Moving Up Sunday Is August 9th!

Sunday school resumes on August 9 and pre-k4 to 5th grade students are promoted to the next grade level!

Prek–4: So Loved Monkeys Room
 Kindergarten: So Loved Monkeys Room
 1st Grade: Basement Room 37
 2nd Grade: Basement Room 36
 3rd Grade: Basement Room 35
 Quest (4th/5th): Basement Room 33

Communion Class with Pastor Scott on Sunday, August 23

1st–5th grade students and their parents are invited to a special Communion class with Pastor Scott! We'll meet in Dunham Chapel at 10.10 am.



FLOWERS

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are given . . .

August 2 . . . to the glory of God and in memory of loved ones by Melissa and Mike Thibodeaux.

August 9 Open date.

August 16 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Nora Will Diehl and Joan Diehl Smith, grandmother and mother of Cathy Pugsley by David, Cathy, and Catherine Pugsley.

August 23 Open date.

August 30 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Jeanne and Marlin Drake Jr. of Shreveport, parents of Lauren Drake Phillips by Lauren & Ron Phillips.

Chapel and Sanctuary flowers may be donated by contacting Kathy Mullins (225.603.4735).



YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS & HAPPENINGS

Croskrey Farewell Reception, August 2



It is with both joy and sadness that we announce Daniel Croskrey has accepted a call to serve as Director of Family Ministry at Covenant Presbyterian in Monroe, Louisiana, beginning September 1. We are deeply grateful for the blessing Daniel, Maegan, and Thomas have been to our church over the past three years and will miss them greatly. Please join us for a farewell reception in the gym following the final combined summer service on August 2 as we celebrate and thank the Croskrey family. Lunch will be served. Please scan the QR code to RSVP as soon as possible!

Confirmation Parent & Student Meeting

Sunday, August 9 at 10:10 am
Basement Room 13

6th grade students and their parents are invited to meet with Colton to learn about what Confirmation entails and the plans we have to make this a great year!

Confirmation Lock-in

Friday, August 14 at 6 pm–12 am
Drop off in the Gym!

The Confirmation Lock-in is an opportunity for our 6th grade class to get to know one another and the youth team. Contact Jessica for more information (jessica@fpcbr.org).

Youth Parent Meeting

Sunday, August 16 at 10:10 am
Dunham Chapel

Come hear what the youth team has planned for the 2026-27 school year!

High School Bible Study Resumes!

Sunday, August 23, 6:30–8 pm
1647 Patrick Drive

Dinner is served!

Contact: Colton (765.491.0507) for more information.

VOLUNTEER IN YOUTH MINISTRIES

Ways to Volunteer

Contact Colton Underwood (colton@fpcbr.org) or visit our Opportunities to Serve webpage () to see how you can volunteer to help in one of the following ways:

Sunday School Teacher or
Group Leader

Sunday Evenings

Host Events

Attend Trips and Retreats as a
Leader or Chaperone



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HISTORY
FACT

GROWING PAINS, 1840

FPC Church History, Continued from Summer 2026

By Zora Olsson

As First Presbyterian Church grew, it faced the challenge of providing a regular salary for its minister. According to the *History of the Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge* (1890), the congregation addressed this issue by asking pew holders to surrender their previously purchased ownership rights so the pews could be leased annually. The income from those leases was then used to support the pastor's salary.

In 1840, the Rev. Jahleel Woodbridge began serving as the church's regular minister while the congregation worked toward calling a permanent pastor. Four years later, he was formally installed as pastor. Under his leadership, church membership grew from 57 to 94.

To be continued in next month's issue of FPC News.

