

This Week @ First

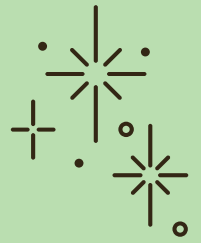


The Fall season is upon us! Children, youth and adults gathered on September 27 before heading to the Mission Fair or classrooms in the education building! The PW hosted the Fall Gathering with Reverend Trinity Whitley leading. Trinity asked this question, “As ones who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, how are we called to live out the inclusive love of Christ so that others might have a sacred encounter?”



Worship & Music

To watch our Sunday worship at 11 am, connect with us on [Youtube](#) (find the bulletin [here](#))! Click the bolded words to follow the links each week.



Care & Outreach

Sign up for our annual picnic in the courtyard after worship and plan to join us on Sunday, September 17th! \$3 per person/\$10 family cap.



Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women launched their new program year at the Fall Gathering last Sunday afternoon. Forty-three members enjoyed fellowship and refreshments as we received new Bible Study guides and were inspired by the Reverend Trinity Whitley’s introduction to the new study of [Luke and Acts](#). And, the school supplies and financial gifts for our Preschool overflowed the table! PW is so grateful for the continuing generosity, kindness and enthusiasm of our Circles, and welcomes any interested persons to join us.

Spiritual Formation — Adults & Children

The Inquirers Class will meet in the Westminster Room and discuss Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement. Bible Study will be offered as a hybrid class, in the Calvin Room and on Zoom, and will begin its study of Ecclesiastes. To join via Zoom click [here](#). Children meet in Room 306 to begin their study, “Called by Name.”

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Compassion & Social Justice

The **Presbyterian Peace Fellowship** is offering another round of online Action Circle trainings, beginning September 7, on the logistics of hosting a Guns to Gardens safe surrender event. Please consider sharing within your networks to help this movement take root in other communities or attending yourself! Sign-ups are open until Wednesday at: <https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/>. As a bonus, Emily Bruno from our congregation will be leading the daytime cohort!

This Sunday, September 3, is First Food Sunday, when dried food and canned goods will be gratefully collected in the Narthex for our neighbors experiencing food scarcity. This month donated items will be delivered to Elder Care Services for their food pantry serving families in need.

State of the Church And August Session Meeting Update

Last Sunday, we heard from the Session at a State of the Church presentation focusing on two areas: Administration and Healing.

Administration — Finances

The Session has created a budget and finance committee to work with our new part-time financial administrator, Fran Owens, to examine all our financial operations. Like congregations throughout our denomination, we face a period of declining resources, which was partially mitigated in recent years by funds available during the pandemic as well as the departure of several staff members. However, our expenses currently exceed our monthly income.

The Session has taken the following steps in response:

1. Engaged with the Presbyterian Foundation to undertake a Project Regeneration/Mission Acceleration effort. Foundation representatives will lead the Session at a retreat later in September to help us plot a sustainable path for the future.
2. With the Endowment Management Committee, authorized that \$75,000 be transferred from the Emergency Operating Fund (EOF). If revenues increase in the Fall, consistent with historical patterns, the EOF will be replenished.
3. Advised the Presbytery that First Presbyterian will be unable to provide additional gifts beyond what we have already contributed for the Presbytery's current fiscal year.

Healing

Overwhelmingly, we have heard a desire to embrace forgiveness and continue the important work of our church. The Envisioning Reconciliation Committee sought as much feedback as possible and identified three major themes:

1. Looking forward. Many have expressed a desire to focus on the work of the church, including forming a new Pastor Nominating Committee. The ERC believes the active listening practices of the last several months are laying a foundation for a healthy process moving forward, and strongly encourages anyone who hopes to be part of the call process to engage in the ERC programming. The work the Session is undertaking with the Presbyterian Foundation will enhance our ability to extend a call.
2. Closure. Several suggestions were made to have some type of ritual or worship service related to closing this season, recognizing that healing will progress at a different pace for everyone involved. The ERC is planning to hold four additional Compassionate Witnessing sessions and is developing a final worship/ritual to complete that work.
3. Accountability. Some expressed concern that there are still unanswered questions and that without proper accountability we will find ourselves in a similar situation in the future. The Interim Pastor and Session are working to build administrative systems designed to make future transitions smoother. Through the healing process, including Compassionate Witnessing, individuals have been able to open themselves to recognize their roles in past transitions. Beyond this, the ERC and Session will not comment on individual personnel matters.

Don Winstead, one of the presenters, gave the following summary: "As our church moves forward, our future will be different and I trust faithful, as always, to following God's call. First Pres Tallahassee in a new season has an important role to play in our community and in our denomination. Our resources and our congregation's needs may be different than they were in the past. Our staffing, our operating model, and our budget will likely be different, but our life of ministry and mission will be impactful."