



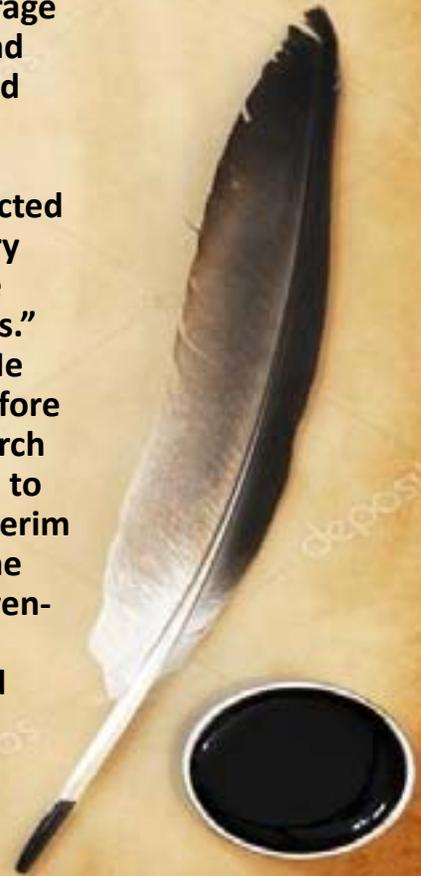
# FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH OF NEW BRAUNFELS CONNECTION

Where everybody is somebody, and Jesus Christ is Lord Fall 2020

## **From Pastor Woodward's Desk**

October 5 marks my three-month anniversary with you. Tracie and I praise God for the opportunity to open the Bible with you, to minister with you, to listen to your stories, and begin a healing process. We've witnessed some tearful breakthroughs already, and for that, we are grateful to God. I'm hoping that positive gossip will spread and that reconciliation would become more infectious than COVID-19. I am available to conduct "peace talks" and to serve as a mediator between parties. I encourage you to forgive one another and to do it personally and privately. I encourage you to release all bitterness and malice.

As the outsider looking in, I believe most everyone acted in good faith. According to the FPC constitution, every member has the right to a voice and a vote. We have spoken and voted. We were told to "trust the process." It worked...in a fashion. I believe God has us where He wants us, but now there is a new process in place before we can even think about forming another pastor search committee. This involves recruiting a transition team to help me complete the punch list of an intentional interim pastorate as outlined by Interim Pastor Ministries, the ministry that employs me. I'll be announcing this seven-member transition team next month. Pray for us as we blaze the trail ahead. Pray that God's Spirit would revitalize our church.





# FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH OF NEW BRAUNFELS

172 West Coll Street  
New Braunfels, Texas 78130  
Church Office (830) 609-7729  
First Protestant School (830) 606-4110

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## First Protestant Church Staff Directory Church Office Phone (830) 609-7729

\*Please note that some of our extensions have changed.

**The Church Staff can be reached by email using the addresses below.**

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<b>Tyler Reed</b> - Director of Youth and Children's Ministries	Ext. 114	tyler@firstprotestant.com
<b>Christian de la Cruz</b> - Choir and Handbell Director	(c) 956-821-5391	Cdelac4@neisd.net
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Church Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 9-12 & 1-4, Friday 9-12 & 1-3

*Where Everybody is Somebody, and Jesus Christ is Lord*

**Please enjoy your newsletter in full color online at [firstprotestant.com](http://firstprotestant.com).**

# FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH OF NEW BRAUNFELS

## Adult Connection Groups - Fall 2020

Sundays, 9:30am

**Light, Life & Love ABF (The Well room 2)** – Rev. Phil Brown

This new ABF (Adult Bible Fellowship) will be studying through the Gospel of John.

Sundays, 10:50am

**C.A.L.M. (The Well room 2)** – Chris & Kristi Beabout

The Christian Adult Learning Ministries class meets in the Heritage House. Topical studies focus on giving Biblical perspective to marriage and family concerns.

**Faithful Servants (The Well room 4)** – Lynn Herr

The Faithful Servants class studies the Bible using a read and discuss format. The book of Hebrews will be the focus of the next study.

**Kingdom Seekers (The Well room 5)** – Wayne Wise

The Kingdom Seekers class will pick up their study of the Letters of Paul – they are currently finishing 2 Corinthians and will then begin a study of Romans.

**Legacy Builders (The Well room 7)** – Celeste Salge

The Legacy Builders class will be discussing world events that relate to adults (60+) from a Christian perspective.



## Other Days / Times

### **20s** – Larissa Leal & Roxy Ullrich

A new young adult group (college-age / young 20s) is forming! Meeting schedule and study topics are TBA. Contact Larissa Leal at 760-486-8560 or Roxy Ullrich at 830-609-7271 to get on board!

### **Band of Brothers / B.o.B.s** – Rob Miller

The B.o.B.s meet offsite on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm. They are currently studying “From Jesus to the Gospels.” Contact Rob Miller at 210-573-5253 for more information.

### **GriefShare (The Well room 2)** – Marilyn Challenner

GriefShare is a 13-week faith-based grief recovery course. Meetings will be held on Wednesdays from 6:00-8:00pm beginning September 16. Contact Marilyn Challenner at 830-624-5440 for more information.

### **PB&J / Pizza, Beer & Jesus** – Brian & Caressa Vajdos, Rodney & Cathy Fischer

PB&J is a small group primarily made up of parents of teens. Meeting schedule and study topics are flexible. Contact Caressa Vajdos at 210-274-5938 or Rodney Fischer at 830-708-8101 for info.

### **Sole Prayers** – Rev. Phil Brown

Sole Prayers exists to bless our community through our prayers. We meet on Saturday mornings at 8:00am (beginning September 12) at local NB parks and neighborhoods to walk / jog / run and pray.

### **Women’s Bible Study** – Sue Saur

This group meets at the Saur home on Thursday evenings at 6:45pm. Studies rotate between topical and those focused on a book of the Bible. Contact Sue Saur at 830-708-0302 for more information.

### **Young and Young-at-hearts / Ya-yahs** – Marilyn Challenner

The Ya-yahs meet offsite each Monday from 7:00-9:00pm using the Precept Upon Precept inductive Bible study method. Contact Marilyn Challenner at 830-624-5440 for more information.

### **Moms in Prayer (The Well room 2)** — Carol Burr

Thursdays at 1pm.

**FIRST PROTESTANT**  
CHURCH OF NEW BRAUNFELS

# The Hope in the Struggle

*by Sue Saur*

“Seeing 20/20 in 2020: Lord, give us your eyes, so we can see as you see, and love as you love.” This, the theme of the 2020 Global Impact Celebration—that 5-day celebration of missions we offered the last week in February—was perhaps a prayer we prayed without full sincerity. At the very least, we were not prepared for all the possible implications. A week before “the vote”, and a few weeks before the pandemic arrived and unpacked all its baggage—no doubt, by now our eyes have been opened to some uncomfortable truths we might have rather left undiscovered.

Every uncomfortable truth invites an opportunity for a struggle.

As a teacher, children would come running to me listing the wrongs of an offending classmate. I was the authority—in that role, my job was to get that offender back in line... My response to the tattler was this: “What was your part?”

It’s so much easier to list the wrongs of another. It’s so much more difficult to reflect on our part.

If COVID has offered us an opportunity for anything...it has been the opportunity to reflect.

If my prayer truly IS “to see as God sees, so I can love as God loves”, how does that play out in regard to my response to the events that have unfolded over the past many months?

How does it affect the way I see other church members who have a different opinion than mine?

How does it affect the way I see church in general?

How does it affect the way I see the mandatory use of masks, or racial injustice, or social unrest, or the resumption of professional sports?

How does it affect the amount of toilet paper I buy?

What’s my part? Is it judgment? Is it disregard? Is it arrogance, bitterness, or unforgiveness? Is it self-righteousness, or selfishness?

Struggling with the uncomfortable truth that I can be all those things is humbling.

Just where God wants me to be.

Just where God wants our church to be.

Uh, Sue, you titled this article “The Hope in the Struggle.” Where’s the hope?

A discussion of “Hope” begins with what it is not. It is not a wish. While we use the two words interchangeably, a wish is not the hope the Bible promises. “Hope” is waiting with certain expectation.

God doesn’t allow us to struggle without a reason. Struggle has its purposes. It allows us to see just how much we need His grace. It is only when we recognize our own desperate need for grace, that we are humbled enough to offer it to others.

Our hope—our expectation-- is that while He loves us without condition, He loves us enough to illuminate the dark corners of our character and reveal them for what they are...sin. Uncomfortable truths.

Yet the beauty of honestly and humbly submitting to the struggle with these uncomfortable truths is this: He doesn't leave us there! He, by His grace begins a work in us—to trade in those old attitudes spurred by self-ishness for a new likeness—one more of self-lessness.

I read once that God is more concerned with our holiness than our happiness. A sobering statement to be sure. He is fine with us being uncomfortable because it will lead to our transformation.

So, what does that mean for the people of First Protestant Church? The timing of events of the past months has been too unique to deny God's hand in it all. I believe He is using this time to speak to us individually, and corporately as a church. To sit in our struggle as we contemplate our future as the First Protestant Church of New Braunfels.

To challenge our understanding of our own Christianity and the work of sanctification on our own lives.

To challenge our ideas of what it means to be HIS church in such a time as this--how we should represent Him and serve Him within our walls, in our community, and the world.

To reflect on our part. To struggle with holiness.

Our hope—our expectation—is that God is who He says He is. That He is in Control. That He will use our struggle for His glory.

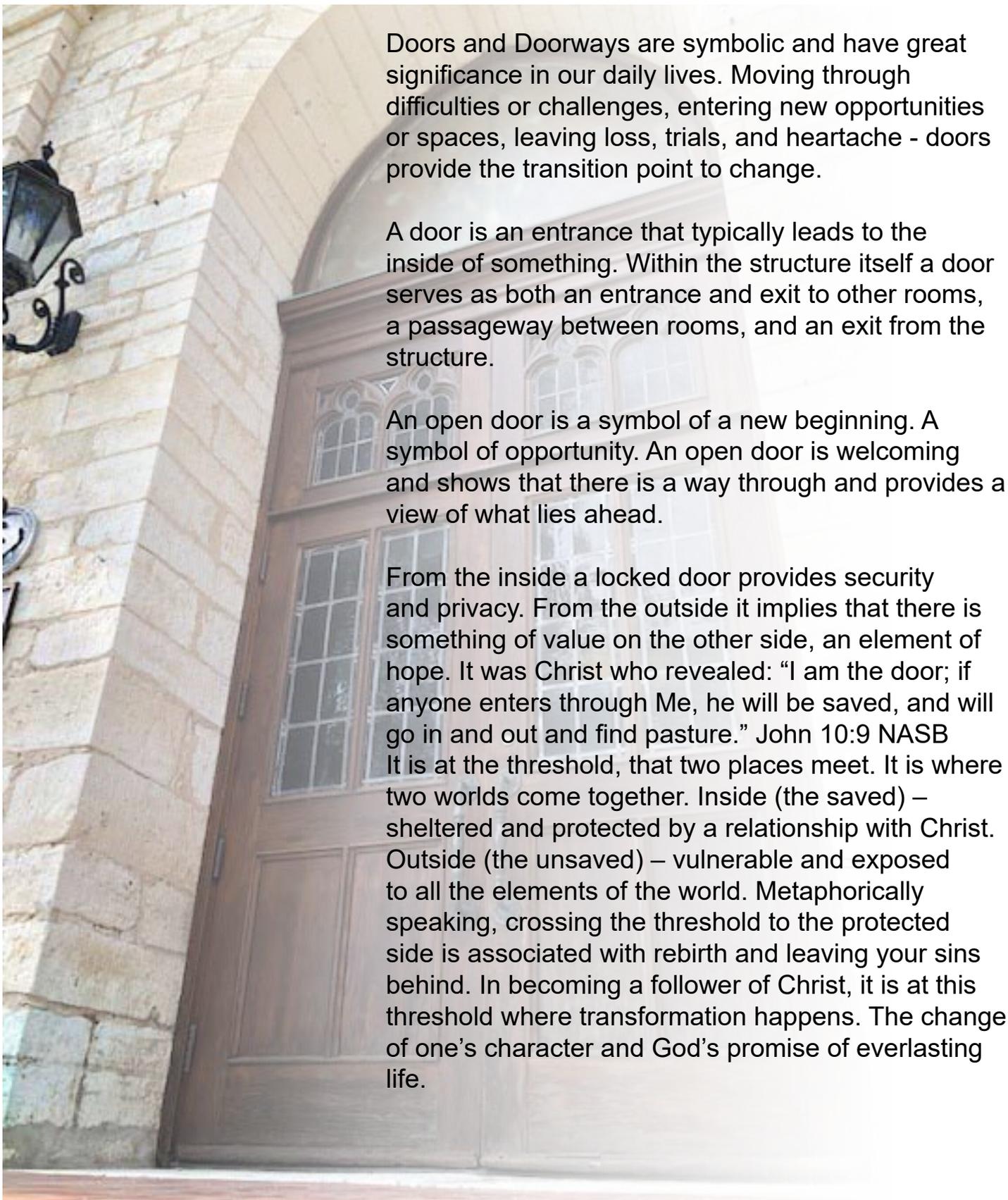
The struggle is uncomfortable. But we can be sure of our hope—our expectation that God is working in us and through us to make us a people who can better see as He sees, and love as He loves.

Lord, hear our prayer.

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# “On The Threshold”

*by Jerald Schroeder*



Doors and Doorways are symbolic and have great significance in our daily lives. Moving through difficulties or challenges, entering new opportunities or spaces, leaving loss, trials, and heartache - doors provide the transition point to change.

A door is an entrance that typically leads to the inside of something. Within the structure itself a door serves as both an entrance and exit to other rooms, a passageway between rooms, and an exit from the structure.

An open door is a symbol of a new beginning. A symbol of opportunity. An open door is welcoming and shows that there is a way through and provides a view of what lies ahead.

From the inside a locked door provides security and privacy. From the outside it implies that there is something of value on the other side, an element of hope. It was Christ who revealed: “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” John 10:9 NASB It is at the threshold, that two places meet. It is where two worlds come together. Inside (the saved) – sheltered and protected by a relationship with Christ. Outside (the unsaved) – vulnerable and exposed to all the elements of the world. Metaphorically speaking, crossing the threshold to the protected side is associated with rebirth and leaving your sins behind. In becoming a follower of Christ, it is at this threshold where transformation happens. The change of one’s character and God’s promise of everlasting life.

Let us talk about the doors and thresholds of our historic sanctuary. Where two worlds literally come together. The inside - protected by a controlled environment. The outside - exposed to severe conditions. They too, need life altering repair and transformation.

Unlike our own salvation, the process to “save” our doors requires artisans and craftsmen with expertise in woodworking and stained-glass restoration. Over the years we have had work performed on our stained-glass windows by a world-renowned company, Cavallini Brothers, located in San Antonio. They have contracted with a woodworking craftsman, who specializes in historic preservation, to provide the services this project requires. We have received a proposal that includes repairs and restoration of the framing, doors, hardware, stained glass, and protective coverings for all four exterior doors of the Sanctuary. Although we have some funds that can be applied to the \$47,900 cost, this proposal is considerable and outside the budget of the church. We have asked if this proposal could be completed in phases, but that approach is not feasible. To be effective it is essential that this transformation happen all at once.

Therefore, we are turning to the members and friends of First Protestant for assistance. To move forward, we need to raise the needed funds. If this endeavor is of interest to you, we ask that you contact our Business Manager, Doreen Schaeffer or our Treasurer, Jeff Albrecht by calling the church office.

With your help, it is our hope that we can secure funds to proceed with the restoration in time for our next anniversary celebration in March 2021. Do you want to be on the threshold?



# Women's Ministries

From the Desk - of Gay Wimberley  
President Women's Ministries



Officers are (front row left to right)  
Gay Wimberley, President;  
Sally Voges, Vice-President;  
Jennifer Graham, Secretary;  
Kim Recio, Treasurer;  
Members-At-Large (back row left to right)  
Lizanne Wynne, Daphne Spraitzar,  
and Sara Tays (not pictured).



Women's Ministries prepping the garland  
for FPC Christmas decorations



Women's Ministry 8th Annual Kick Off Luncheon  
at Creekbottom Farm



Ada helping out at  
the Christmas Eve service.

# *Jill Rodriguez, Director of Lay Ministry*



It is with a heavy heart that we announce that Jill Rodriguez is leaving her staff position as Director of Lay Ministry. During her time at First Protestant, Jill has spent countless hours with elderly and shut in members, spoken at funerals, held hands before procedures, offered communion, and spent time in prayer and the scriptures with numerous First Protestant members. She has been a bright light in the lives of many of our seniors who face loneliness on a daily basis, whether being unable to leave home or residing in a facility. Jill's contribution to this ministry has been a blessing to many members of our church family.

Jill has touched many lives at FPC. Before accepting the role as Director of Lay Ministry, she also served as our Director of Children's Ministry for 5 years. Through Sunday school, VBS, Summer Sizzle and so much more, she dedicated so much of herself to teaching and loving our children. Even today, she remains involved in the lives of many of the children who passed through her program.

Her love and dedication to the people she has served over the years will be missed, but we wish her peace and joy as she begins a new chapter in her life.



# Get to Know Our New Sanctuary Choir and Handbell Director, *Christian De la Cruz*.

Our Handbell Choir director has accepted an additional position as our new Sanctuary Choir director, also. Christian Paul De la Cruz is in his 11th year of teaching and 10th year as an associate choir director with the internationally acclaimed Reagan High School Choir Program in San Antonio, TX and has served as the associate director of music at First Protestant Church, New Braunfels since 2014. Christian graduated summa cum laude from Texas State University with a bachelors in music education and a minor in mathematics thanks to the Terry Foundation Full Ride Scholarship awarded to just 16 out of over 5000 incoming freshmen.



Choirs under his direction have earned consistent Superior ratings at UIL Concert & Sightreading, and Reagan High School has consistently had multiple students place in Texas All-State Choirs. In 2017 Reagan won the State Championship for choir with American Classic Texas Madrigal Festival against the very top 40 high school choirs from all across Texas. Christian is frequently invited as a clinician, judge, and guest conductor for various high-schools, middle-schools, and choral festivals throughout the state. Christian has conducted and toured with his choirs in Peru, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Italy. In 2019 the Reagan Choir program was crowned Champion of Leonardo Da Vinci International Choral Festival in Florence, Italy where they competed against the best choirs from Spain, Denmark, Bulgaria, the Philippines, Indonesia, Costa Rica, and China. He serves as the executive administrator for the Texas State University Choir Camp and also sings professionally with the San Antonio Chamber Choir.

Christian is a member of TMEA, TCDA, TMAA, Mu Phi Epsilon, and has served on the Advisory Board for the Terry Foundation. Christian immigrated from the Philippines at age 3 and grew up with the wonderful choral programs in McAllen, TX. Christian has been singing in church choirs for as long as he can remember and discovered Christ's eternal love through the singing of hymns and sacred music.

Christian believes it is his calling to share the gifts of Jesus's Gospel through the vehicle of singing and ringing in harmony with one another. He is excited to be directing the FPC Sanctuary Choir, Bell Choir, and newly formed Children's Choir under the leadership of his mentor and FPC Director of Music, Dr. Joey Martin. Christian currently resides in San Antonio with his two greatest joys: his wife, Audrey, and five year old daughter, Rose.

# A Life of Faithful Service

by Sandy Reimer, Choir member



When I think of faithfulness and dedication, Darwin and Jeanette Dietert come to mind. They both started attending First Protestant E & R Church as youngsters and it was there that both were confirmed, becoming church members. The two learned more about each other and their values in their New Braunfels High School years, and this led to a long life together. Darwin and Jeanette fell in love and married in their church in 1953. It was Darwin's brother and his wife, who, in 1952, encouraged the couple to join the church's Sanctuary Choir. The choir became the Dieterts' small church family and came to mean a great deal to them. They were blessed with three children, two sons, Dale and Carey and a daughter, Dena. Their whole family is musical and the children have used their God given gifts in First Protestant church and their own churches as well. Music has taken the Dietert's many places and a highlight for them was the choir's trip to Braunfels, Germany in June of 2003. What an interesting and fun experience that was! They have remained faithful members of the choir for 68 years, from the earliest years of their marriage, and recently decided it was time to rest from this commitment. The two of them have also served the church in many other ways over the years by serving on various committees, on the church council, and volunteering for Sunday school, church and choir office work and more. Their lives of faithful dedication to First Protestant Church are a high example to all of us. We honor them for their years of loving service and wish them many blessings and continued loving moments. Thank you, Darwin and Jeanette, for giving so much of yourselves to the music ministry and the church through the years. You are cherished by choir members past and present. Your faces will always be missed and especially your presence with us in the choir loft.

*"Our only regret is that we will miss singing under Christian's wonderful leadership; but we will now enjoy being in church to continue hearing our beautiful choir and other music!"*  
Jeanette and Darwin Dietert

# Homecoming 2020

by Pastor Tyler Reed

Director of Youth and Children's Ministries

Big football games and even bigger mums, we Texans know how to do Homecoming right every Fall. And on the weekend of September 11-13th, First Protestant put on our own sort of homecoming: one for our church! It was a special weekend, as it was the first time since COVID-19 shut everything down in March that we had Sunday School classes and Children's Ministry activities! While services have been resumed for some time, there was just always a little something missing each week and that was the joy of having all of our kids back, having fun and learning about Jesus! We kicked the weekend off with a cook out at Rob Miller's on Friday night for the families of our Children's Ministry and then continued it the next day with more fun, games, and lessons for our kids out by the water on Saturday. We learned about the importance of listening to God because he has important things to say. Then on Sunday we launched our new Sunday morning program in style with a bounce house and snow cones for all! We began a multi-year long study of the Gospel Project which will take us from Genesis to Revelation showing how the entire Bible is one unified story telling God's plan of redemption. Each week we will learn how each story of the Bible all points to Jesus! While we won't always have a bounce house, we will always have a blast. I hope you will join us on our journey through the Bible each Sunday morning. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time or resources to make this amazing week happen. Be looking out for upcoming announcements about future fun events our Children's





# SUMMER SIZZLE

# 175 *Celebrating* YEARS

## Happy Anniversary First Protestant Church!

We will celebrate FPC's 175th anniversary on October 4, Charter Sunday. We will honor our founders and remember our history in both services in the sanctuary (traditional at 9:30 and contemporary at 11). We will sing our favorite hymns. We will display irreplaceable artifacts, such as the communion chalice that Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels brought with him from Germany. We will also display the all-seeing eye of God stained glass window. (You old-timers know what I'm talking about!) Some of our history loving members will share tidbits from FPC's past. Dr. Woodward will be preaching Psalm 121, the Psalm in which find our familiar benediction. Charter Sunday will remind us that God has indeed blessed us in the past and we will invite His blessing to continue. Invite your friends and family, especially if they have historical ties to our church. While supplies last, we will give away free lapel pins that commemorate the 175th anniversary

CAMPAIGN LIFE COALITION PRESENTS:  
**LIFE CHAIN**   
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2020**

**Celebrate Life in the Life Chain on October 4.** Join people from a host of churches from 2:30-4:00pm at the Main Plaza gazebo. We will pray, then take our signs and helium balloons to stand for life around the gazebo and down the adjoining streets. Call or text your questions to Mary Legreid at 805-975-3398 or [nfpchangeseverything@gmail.com](mailto:nfpchangeseverything@gmail.com).

**The Lord says,**

**"FORGET WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE,  
AND DO NOT THINK ABOUT THE PAST.  
LOOK AT THE NEW THING  
I AM GOING TO DO.  
IT IS ALREADY HAPPENING.  
DON'T YOU SEE IT?"**

**- Isaiah 43:18-19**

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