



2023

FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH OF NEW BRAUNFELS CONNECTION

Seeking God, Sharing His Love, Serving Others New Beginnings



"Seeing with New Eyes"

I wonder if you remember the "Magic Eye" wall art that became popular back in the mid 1980s-90s (google tells me it is technically referred to as "autostereograms")?

Looking like a snowstorm of fuzz on a television screen, these images were often framed and sold in the mall. It was common to see a small huddle of folks standing in front of one of these pictures for 5 or 10 minutes, until one-by-one they said, 'Oh wow, I can see it!' Those little exclamations drew more people into the circle.



As you may remember, if you stared at the blur long enough and in just the right way, the picture transformed before your eyes. Somehow the flat blur gave way to depth and shapes appeared. It seemed as though you could reach your hand into the fuzz as the 2D became 3D.

I have been thinking about those Magic Eye or Autostereogram images recently, because there seems to be a widespread feeling at the present moment that surveying our cultural landscape leaves one feeling like they are looking at a fuzzy snowstorm. Of course, that has always been the case to a certain degree, but what I take to be unique and somewhat new in American life is the quiet insistence being pushed by almost all of our cultural leaders that the 2D perspective is all there is to see. It's all fuzz and blur!

What is the 2D perspective? From what I can tell, "time" and "stuff" make up the essential elements of most public conversations today. In fact, this '2D ONLY' mindset runs so deeply that it has become the unstated and unchallenged tenet of faith that undergirds our social institutions. It goes something like this: If people are given enough time and money, our disagreements and social problems will disappear. And so, discussions begin with a 2D analysis and then proceed to 2D solutions. But what we are finding is that something in the human spirit (call it what you will - 'morality', 'spirituality', 'religion', etc.) yearns for our common life together to be more than a blurry fuzz of infighting over the limited resources of time and money.



FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH OF NEW BRAUNFELS

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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.

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Church Office Hours:

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

Seeking God, Sharing His Love, Serving Others

Please enjoy your newsletter online at firstprotestant.com.

Of course, the Bible has much to say about the 2D issues of time management and financial stewardship (see the Book of Proverbs, for example). And numerous stories from Scripture emphasize that time and resources need careful attention (see Acts 6, for example). But, if our Lord taught us anything in his earthly ministry, it was surely that real, full, and abundant life requires much more than time and money (see Matthew 6:25b, “Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”)! Let’s not over-spiritualize here; after all, Christians enjoy holidays and tax breaks as much as anyone else! But our life with Jesus goes much deeper than these 2D elements.

A true and robust Christian community is one that invites newcomers and long-time members to an ever deepening vision. Visiting and especially being involved in a vibrant church will feel like putting on a pair of glasses - the teachings, outreach, community gatherings and compassionate care of the church will bring into focus spiritual dynamics that are hiding in plain sight among 2D realities. Through the ministries of the church, we remember together the blessings that we so easily forget; we hear a friend whom we thought we knew tell a faith-building story that changed the course of their lives; we find our hearts moved by various needs in our community and world that will never hit the headlines; and we encounter God’s gracious call to live as a forgiven people full of hope.

The pages of this Newsletter invite us all to see with a fuller 3D vision and to keep in focus those things that Jesus Christ purchased for us in his incarnation, death and resurrection. In the many wonderful opportunities on offer at First Protestant Church for gathering and outreach, God’s Holy Spirit trains us to keep an eye on what truly matters and endures.

For example, you will be reminded about the upcoming opportunity to learn what God is doing around the world, as missionaries visit FPC for our GIC event (Feb 16-19th). You will read Sue Saur’s encouraging words to keep worship at the center of our service, and you will be inspired by Mrs. Thora Williams, who recently celebrated with her Eden Home friends 100 years of life and God’s goodness. You will learn of initiatives at First Protestant School which help young ones and their families develop healthy habits and celebrate God’s gifts. You will see the joyful faces of our teens, as they entered further into the deep meaning of Christmas through games and fun and will be encouraged by Pastor Tyler’s call to enter more fully into God’s story with our kids. The Women’s Ministries, Flying Fingers, Wild at Heart Boot Camp, and Children’s Choir and Youth Handbell announcements remind us all of the many talents and abilities God has given our church members.

God has established His church on earth to focus our eyes on the third dimension, so that over and over again we can tell the world around, “Oh wow, I can see God at work here!”

Grateful to be among you,
Rev. Dr. Andrew Keuer

Ms. Thora Williams' 100th Birthday!



On October 18, 2022, Mrs. Thora Williams, a long time member of First Protestant Church, celebrated her 100th birthday.

Ms. Thora currently resides in memory care at Eden Home Communities. On October 18th, Pastor Woody, Janice Borgfeld, our Director of Lay Ministry, and Thora's Lay Minister, Edie Burquest, celebrated her 100th birthday with cake and juice along with her daughter, Kay and other residents in her community. Ms. Thora is fondly remembered as an active member of Women's Fellowship in earlier years. She faithfully sent out greeting cards to women of the church.

We congratulate Ms. Thora on her life of service and love of Christ.



February Newsletter

We have a lot of important dates coming up this month so be sure to pay attention to those! We would like to thank our families for making registration such a smooth success!

Picture Day!

This month Lifetouch will be visiting to take student, classroom, and Graduation photos on February 6th and 7th. Forms will be handed out for you to fill out and return to your child's teacher before or on picture day. There will be a date on the form in which your child will be taking pictures on.

Valentine's Day Party

Each Classroom will be having a Valentine's Day party on Tuesday, February 14th. Your child's Teacher will be posting a sign-up sheet for food, drinks, utensils, and anything else they might need. Please make sure you are signing up to bring an item. The number of students in the classroom will also be on the sign-up sheet so you are aware of how much to bring. On Valentine's Day cards please don't address "To" only "From".

Dr. Seuss Week

Read Across America Week, also known as, Dr. Seuss Week will be February 27th – March 3rd. We will have themes posted for that week coming soon and each classroom will perform fun and unique activities in honor of Dr. Seuss and in celebration of reading.

Parent's Night Out

First Protestant School will be hosting our first Parent's Night Out for our families on Friday, February 10th! It will be \$40 per child (cash only), and we will be providing pizza for dinner, along with Valentine themed activities, crafts, and cookies. There are only 50 spots available so sign up quickly at the front office.

National Children's Dental Health Month

Tree Top Dentistry will be visiting us for National Children's Dental Health Month. They will be putting on a puppet show and educating our kids on why dental health is important and how they can keep their teeth clean and safe. More information will be sent out including the date.

Reminders

- February 6th & 7th: Picture Day 
- February 10th: Parent's Night Out 
- February 14th: Valentine's Day Classroom Parties
- Dr. Seuss Week: February 27th-March 3rd

Global Impact Celebration Events

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

February 16 7pm

Global Impact Welcome Service

featuring music and message by Wink Kelso

February 17 6:30 pm

Dinner with a Missionary

*dinner at small group host homes-
check your brochure for locations.*

February 18 6:30 pm

Bunco with the Missionaries

bring a potluck and join in the fun!

February 19 9:30 am

Brunch with a Missionary

featuring our famous "speed dating" fun!

Combined Worship 11 AM - Schumann Hall

featured guest speaker John Paul Tiendrebegs

You don't want to miss any of these events!

Service IS Worship!

By Sue Saur



The Hebrew word “worship” can be translated as a bowing down, a gesture of submission to our God. We express our gratitude, our homage, our respect, and love for our Creator—*our worship*—through song, and prayer—each Sunday morning.

But surely that one hour a week isn’t all we expect to offer...

My private worship times—my morning devotionals, always include my Bible reading for the day, and certainly prayer journalling. But there have been moments I have felt moved to sing. I don’t plan it, it just happens; it’s just me, lifting my voice to the Lord. True worship is just that. I respond to God’s prompting—and I am confident He enjoys a melody I am not so sure **you** would!

And that’s ok. The scriptures say a “joyful noise”. Thankfully there’s nothing in there about being on key!

Still, I need to say—when *the God of the universe* prompts me to sing for Him—and I reply with a simple hymn—

I am overwhelmed.

It’s a powerful way to start your day.

On a random Wednesday morning, what does worship look like for you?

The theme of the **Global Impact Celebration for 2023** is

“Service IS Worship”.

Have you thought about your service as a form of worship?

Well, the truth is—whenever you **serve**—you are worshipping someone or something.

For so many years, I am sad to say, when I served, I was worshipping me. Helping others made me feel good about myself. I am here to tell you, if you are serving to make yourself feel better, if you are serving to “improve your self-esteem”, if you are serving so others will think you are a good person—your service is a worship of you.

Perhaps there is a better way! Today, I want my service to be for

Service IS Worship!

By Sue Saur



Him. All through the New Testament, Paul talks about using our gifts in service to others—doing it— as a gift to God.

Have you thought about your service as a gift to God? That coffeecake, that lesson at the retirement home, that ramp you built, that brisket you cooked—it can all be an offering.

Your service to others is an offering to God when you consciously frame it as such.

Today, as I start whatever “service” I am undertaking, I stop. I stand outside that door, and I take a moment to say, “This next hour is for you, Lord. Bless it. Let it be for **your** glory.”

When I remember to do that simple thing, I change the focus. I remember the reason I am there.

It’s not about me.

It’s about YOU, Lord. Use it as you see fit.

It’s so simple. Yet it is life-altering.

This GIC is jam packed with opportunities for you to get to know

some missionaries we have supported for a long time, as well as some we are just getting to know. Their service has been an offering to God. Their sacrifices have been for Jesus—so others may know Him and love Him, too.

And they want to tell you all about how that has played out in their lives.

February 16-19. Four days to love on our missionaries—and to glean some wisdom from them. To get to know them as just regular Joes, just like you and me.

Mark your calendars. Plan to attend. Plan to participate.

Your service IS your worship.

You will surely come away changed.

You will come away with a new love of service. A new love for worship.

A new love for your GOD.

And just maybe, you will come away with a new sense of God’s love for you.

Our God is an awesome God.

“The Magic of Storytelling”

by Pastor Tyler Reed
Director of Children and Youth Ministries

I don't know about you, but storytelling has always had a profound effect on me. As a kid (and if I'm being totally honest as an adult sometimes too) I always wanted to be swept up into some grand story. I wanted to fall through a wardrobe and find myself in a magical land. I wanted a wizard to knock on my door and tell me of a dragon guarding a treasure under a mountain in a far away land. I wanted an owl to bring me a letter inviting me to come to a magical school.

I think along with art and music, storytelling is part of what makes humanity unique. I think God has designed us to learn through storytelling for a reason because God himself teaches us through stories, be that true stories such as the historical books of scripture or the parables that Jesus would tell. Stories in whatever form can be simple escapist entertainment, but they can also be so much more if we allow them to be. Stories have an ability to teach, to help us think about the world beyond our own experiences, and to inspire through provoking conversations about life, our world, spirituality, and God.

One of my daughter, Bailey's, favorite movies is Disney's recent film, Encanto. It is a film about a Columbian family, the Madrigals, where all the children and grandchildren of the matriarch, Abuela, have magical gifts... well that is except the protagonist, Maribel, who laments her lack of magic and feeling of not being special. Beyond the music or even the amazing Columbian setting what makes Encanto great to me is its deeply Biblical message. Despite being a “fantastical and magical” family each with their own special gift who live together in a magical “casita” there are cracks beneath the surface... both literally and figuratively.

Every time I watch this movie I'm reminded of Paul writing to the Corinthians who were a special family of their own, the family of God. Paul tells them of the different gifts they have, although instead of those gifts being super hearing, controlling the weather, and talking to animals, they are things like faith, wisdom, and teaching. In speaking of their gifts, however, Paul cautions them that everyone in the body is needed and that there must be unity. He writes, “The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Corinthians 12:21-26 ESV).

That message, that the parts of the body which may seem weaker are in fact indispensable is the exact lesson we learn through Maribel when watching Encanto. And if we think more deeply about all of the stories we consume I promise you will find these Biblical truths hiding everywhere in plain sight. Stories are so much more than just distractions. The good ones always tap into some truth, even if unintentionally. That is why they resonate in our hearts.

I said at the beginning that I longed to be brought into a grand story and while I don't think I will be living in a magical house in Columbia anytime soon, the great news is that all of us actually are being invited into the grandest story of all. The greatest story being told is the story of God redeeming humanity to himself. The more I read scripture the more amazed I am by just how compelling that story is. For Christmas I got Bailey a Story Bible by Kevin DeYoung that I cannot recommend enough. It so succinctly retells Bible stories in an engaging and age appropriate way while also bringing to the surface so much theological depth and beauty. It has been the highlight of each day to read one story a night with her. I think we are both learning things as we go and the conversations it has inspired about who God is have been priceless.

I want to invite you to read more stories with your kids and after reading a story or watching a movie to think about what truths were told. Ask questions like what were the values displayed? What were the lessons being taught? And even more importantly I want to encourage you to make telling and retelling the stories of scripture a regular part of your day or week with your kids. It is hard to overstate the spiritual impact reading and discussing these stories will have on the spiritual development of your child. You will be amazed by the conversations this will inspire and how often even talking about a Disney movie can naturally turn toward the spiritual which provides amazing teaching opportunities.



Women's Ministries

From the desk of Celeste Salge

Women's Ministries



Calling All Women of FPC

New ideas, old ideas, field trip ideas - we had a great start to the New Year at the Women's Ministries January meeting on January 9th.

25 women were in attendance. Charlene Nolte did an excellent job installing the new officers as well as thanking the past officers that were in attendance (Debbie Williams and Jennifer Graham) for their dedication and leadership that they provided. Sally Voges will serve as vice president, Kim Recio as treasurer and Charlene Johnston and Cristabell West as members at large again this year. Newly installed officers include Cindy Gibson, a member at large, Florence Borchers, secretary and Celeste Salge, president.

Pastor Keuer took time out of his busy schedule and thanked us for what we do for the church. And we all appreciated that kind gesture.

We discussed our past participation in Eden Hill Communities and plan to provide some homemade cookies for them in the near future. We also discussed a scholarship idea that Edie Burquest had proposed last year.

Our distribution of funds task was given to a committee to discuss and recommend suggestions.

New ideas for the year were discussed and committees were formed:

1. A Celebration of Women Banquet
2. Sponsoring of the Children's Lenten Workshop
3. Providing sandwiches to the Salvation Army

We decided that we would be providing the Easter lilies in the front of the church as we have in the past.

Several ideas were suggested for a field trip in April and also perhaps offering a Scrapbooking class(es) for all interested (You do not need to be in WM to attend) in the evening.

Prayer requests were taken, praises expressed and Cindy Gibson closed the meeting in prayer.

Scrumptious desserts and snacks were provided by Laurel Evans and Cristabell West.

Celeste

Our 2023 Officers and Board Members



From Left to Right: Celeste Salge, President; Sally Voges, Vice-President; Florence Borchers, Secretary; Kim Recio, Treasurer; Charlene Johnston, Cindy Gibson and Cristabel West, Members-at-Large

Save the Date!

***"Get Ready, Set, Go" for Women's Ministries Spring Brunch
May 6, 2023, 10 - noon, doors will open at 9:30***

SPRING
Brunch

**Women, please consider hosting a table
and Men, we are asking you to help as
servers and help in the kitchen. More
details to come. For more information,
contact one of the WM officers or members.**



Flying Fingers

by Sharon Weidemann



We are a group of Christian women supporting First Protestant Church, our School and many local Non-profit organizations and agencies that need our help.

Our Mission:

To bring the Word of God to those in need; to provide comfort and joy to those having difficulties and to provide recognition to our church family members for their dedication and work within FPC throughout the years.

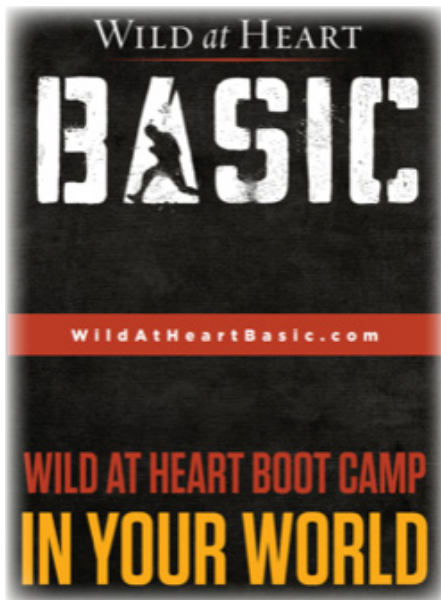
We give from our hearts with God's guidance by making: quilts, hats, scarves, cot covers (for our school) and baby items such as bibs and receiving blankets. We sew, knit, crochet, embroider, quilt and make many other items that we donate to our missionary venues. Most importantly, our Baptismal Quilts and Bible Verse (Quilts of Love) for our Church family are handmade.

Flying Fingers is filled with conversation, laughter, munchies and lots of fellowship. You do not need to know how to sew. We need people to cut, iron and we will teach you how to do all that we are involved in.

We have a great group and are always looking for others to come join in on our fun. We meet on Wednesday mornings, second floor of the Heritage House from 9:00 to 11:00am. Some of our members work out of their homes, also. Everyone is welcome!

For more information, please contact Sharon Weidemann, 830-302-0495 or Musicimpromptu@aol.com





Spring 2023 “Wild at Heart” Boot Camp

It is time for the Spring 2023 "Wild at Heart" Boot Camp! This is your personal invitation and challenge to consider stepping out into deeper waters from just being a member of the “Good Guy Club”, to consider stepping away from the comforts of “churchianity” for a brief moment.

Boot Camp is a weekend getaway for men to get real with God in preparation for the daily battle for His Kingdom! The purpose of this email is to give you some details so you can be praying about your possible participation. Danny Mills and I would love to have you with us for our fourth time hosting the event. Recently, the Band of Brothers studied the book, “If You Want to Walk on Water, You’ve Got to Get Out of the Boat!” by John Ortberg. This is an invitation to do just that. Please see the information below, pray about attending, and then let Danny or I know if you have any questions or if you wish to attend.

What: "Wild at Heart" Men's Bootcamp – based on the book by John Eldredge

When: Evening of Thurs, April 27 thru noon on Sunday, April 30 (3 full days)

Where: Camp Eagle - Rockspring, TX (roughly 2.5 hr drive) - carpooling will be coordinated.

Cost: \$150 / person (don't let this be a deterrent, as scholarships are available) This includes food, lodging, and meeting room for the entire time.

Commitment & Preparation: Pray about it. If you are reading this, God has already put you on our hearts. If you sense God telling you to go but feel the commitment (time or money) is more than you can give, then give me or Danny a call, or let's meet up to discuss.

This will be well worth your time as we plan to unplug and spend time really assessing what we believe and what we are called to do on this messed up planet! No hand-holding. No Kum-ba-yah. Promise (In fact, we plan on shooting guns and blowing things up in our spare time)! We do ask that you purchase and read the book, “Wild at Heart” by John Eldredge prior to the gathering.

We hope to have around 20 men attend. Hope you can make it! More to come – stay tuned.

Rodney's info: Cell (830-708-8101); Email (rodney.fischer6@gmail.com)

Danny's info: Cell (210-473-6914); Email (dannymills3@sbcglobal.net)

Peace,
Rodney Fischer & Danny Mills



***K-5th Grade
Sundays from 11am-11:30am
Location: The Well***

***First Protestant is excited to offer a year-round choral experience for our youngest musicians! The music program at FPC honors the role of the church in training young people for musical leadership. Rehearsals will take place on Sunday mornings from 11-11:30am, students will be taken to The Well following rehearsal. Choristers will learn practical vocal and listening skills, concentration and creativity, and will be exposed to diverse music styles in a variety of languages. The children's choir will perform 3-4 times a semester, with special music for some holiday services. To notify us of your interest for your K-5th grader, please send an email to
Kirsten Boyd kirstboyd@gmail.com***

A background image showing several brass handbells of various sizes, some with wooden frames, arranged on a surface. The image is slightly blurred and has a warm, golden tone.

First Protestant Church Youth Handbells for Grades 6-12 Children's Handbells for Grades 3-5 Spring 2023

Youth in grades 3-5 & 6-12 are invited to join *TWO* new Handbell groups this spring! Youth handbells (6-12th grade) will be led by Trevor Dietert and children's handbells (3rd-5th grade) will be led by Robyn Blanchard. No prior handbell or music reading experience necessary! Youth (6-12) Handbell Rehearsals: Sundays from 10:30am-11:30am

**Children's (3-5) Handbell Rehearsals: Sundays from 11:30-12:00pm
Sunday Offerings: TBD dates during the 9:30am service at FPC
Let us know you are coming: Kirsten Boyd, Interim Music Director,
kirstboyd@gmail.com**

**Kirsten Boyd
Director of Music
First Protestant Church, New Braunfels, TX
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