

Making Plans in God's House

From the Pastor's Desk

"In the abundance of counselors is a venture accomplished." (Proverbs 11:14)

God is indeed accomplishing things among us in 2023. And, as the proverb above says, His favorite way to get things done is through collaboration, shared counsel and unity of purpose.

In May 2023, as a result of good collaboration, I was overjoyed to announce that our part-time Director of Music & Arts, Ms. Kirsten Boyd, accepted FPC's offer to become full-time effective August 1st! (You will read on pages 6-7 of this newsletter that Kirsten has been appointed founding director of the Coll Street Players and First Protestant Music School – two new outreach initiatives launching in Fall 2023.)

We were also excited in early June 2023 to announce the hiring of our VBS Coordinator, Rebekah Richardson, who brings fresh counsel to this important summer outreach ministry. Rebekah has brought energy and leadership, and we celebrate that she will be continuing on as permanent Children's ministry staff.

Good collaboration was evident also in June 2023 when about one-hundred members of First Protestant Church attended and contributed comments at two Vision Luncheons.

After enjoying a delicious lunch together, chairs were circled up and discussion began in response to four questions.

I explained that First Protestant Church's answers to these four questions will play a decisive role in the direction and forward movement of this wonderful church in the decade ahead:

- What key areas of momentum within our church can be enhanced even further?
- What dynamics and opportunities in our surrounding community call for our action?
- What elements of our church's tradition need to be creatively continued and strengthened?
- How can we enrich other EA churches?

In our first luncheon meeting, the participation was so robust that an hour zoomed by ... the problem was, we had only made it through the first two questions! Our second meeting began with questions three and four, but again we found an hour insufficient.



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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Rebekah Richardson - VBS Coordinator /Children's Sunday School Coordinator		rebekahrichardson0@gmail.com
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Debbie Caraway - FPS Director	830-606-4110	debbie@firstprotestant.com
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Church Office Hours:

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

A Spiritual Home at the Heart of the City

Please enjoy your newsletter online at firstprotestant.com.

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My main take away from these two sessions is that FPC members are ready to work together! Each comment or remark given at these meetings added color and clarity to some quadrant of the vast canvas that is the future of First Protestant Church.

Or to quote one historic member who commented to me as we walked out of Schumann Hall after the first vision meeting: “You’ve helped me see there’s a hub to our spokes.”

Dozens of members have asked me in the weeks following these lunches, “What are our next steps? How can I be involved?” Here’s a brief answer...

Firstly, be encouraged with me. The robust participation of so many members is a sure sign that we are alive and well, ready to grow, and eager to move forward together as a congregation. (Our induction of exactly 50 new and renewed members thus far in 2023 is a further encouragement that a new season is upon us!)

Second, there were three focal areas of growth that emerged organically in these vision sessions:

- Outreach, advertisement and presence at public festivals and events (e.g., July 4th parade, Wassailfest, County Fair, etc.)
- Communication refresh to the congregation and community (e.g., website, radio, bulletins, etc.)
- Deepened engagement with our affiliation of churches (Evangelical Association)

To step forward these strategic areas, three Vision Working Groups are being established and will meet two to three times in Fall 2023. Stay tuned for meeting times and places where you can give further input on these key areas.

A final word about the vision luncheons: If you were present at the meetings and reviewed the above list, you will no doubt be saying to yourself that I have left out the most extensive and important discussion of all!

Without a question, the most lively and unified area of conversation at our two lunches regarded refurbishing and reopening the Seele building as an education and community engagement space. The Seele building completed construction in 1929, and so I am calling this vital aspect of our emerging FPC vision: “The Seele 100 Project”.

In all of these plans, God’s preferred method for His church is an abundance of counselors working with one heart and one mind to ensure “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”.

We’re just getting started!

Forward together,
Rev. Dr. Andrew Keuer

Meet Myra Lee Adams Goff

My name is Myra Lee Adams Goff and I was born in 1932. I was actually born in the front bedroom of the house that I lived in for 90 years. Some of my ancestors came to Texas from Germany in 1844 and others in the 1850s. I am a fifth generation New Braunfelser. My parents were Marcus and Cola Moeller Adams. I have been a member of First Protestant Church all of my life. I was baptized at home at the age of three by Pastor Mornhinweg. His primary language was German which he spoke fluently and spoke at church. Speaking English was more difficult for him. I spoke English at home but my mother and her female relatives spoke German when there was something I wasn't supposed to hear. I therefore learned German by listening and knew what they were saying. I went to Sunday School and Confirmation. Our confirmation class had about 60 kids and was taught by Pastor Berger. We met for instruction every Saturday morning until noon. We had a break during the class where we went to the Comal Creamery across the street for ice cream. On Sundays, we sat in the balcony that extended down both sides of the church. This was before the church was remodeled to what it looks like today. I don't remember any chaperones with us in the balcony but Pastor Berger could see us and from the balcony we looked directly into the all-seeing eye of God stained glass window. That window was replaced with the current rose window. My husband Glyn and I were married at First Protestant Church (it was called the Evangelical and Reformed Church back then) in 1952. Our wedding reception was at the Faust Hotel. We had three children, Karen, Patty and Marc.



I went to Texas Christian University and studied journalism and received a teaching degree, teaching English, history, German, art and music. At one time, I was the band director at Lamar Elementary back in the 1950s. Writing is my passion. The 150th Anniversary of the founding of New Braunfels was to be held in 1995 so my writing partner, Rosemarie Leissner Gregory and I decided to write the history of the church. Oscar Haas had written a brief history so we had a starting point. At the time we started our research, all of the original church records were stored in the church basement under the altar. The early records were written by Pastor Ervendberg in old German script. Gene Mornhinweg re-wrote the records in more modern German and then translated them to English. He was the son of Pastor Mornhinweg and I think he was a genius. Copies of the records were given to the Sophienburg and it was a good thing because the basement flooded and many of the records were damaged. The result was the book, "A Journey in Faith, The History of First Protestant Church, New Braunfels, Texas, 1844-1995."

First Protestant Church has always meant a lot to me and I am thrilled at the direction the church is going. We have been blessed for 178 years and are now blessed to have Pastor Andrew Keuer as our spiritual leader.

As it ran in the Herald-Zeitung:

New Braunfels resident Skoog earns Inspirational Senior Texan honor

By Theresa Davis

The Herald-Zeitung Jun 2, 2023



EdenHill Communities resident Herb Scoog was honored with the Inspirational Senior Texan Award at the LeadingAge Texas conference on May 22.

Skoog helped organize the first Wurstfest, was a longtime Wurstfest Association volunteer and owned and operated Radio KGNB/KNBT for more than 50 years. “You become a better person because you give to the community, and it comes back to you,” Scoog said. “I’ve never been one that has been looking forward to making a lot of money ... but I’d rather have the life that I have had, and that is being happy doing what I was doing and thinking it was helping along the way.”

Skoog was inducted into the New Braunfels Chamber Hall of Honor in 1982. The city awarded him Citizen of the Year in 2013, and he received the Frederick Frueholz, Jr. Historic Preservation Award in 2019.

Skoog started the “Reflections” radio program and wrote a year’s worth of special daily radio reports that were broadcast during New Braunfels’ 150th anniversary.

“Herb has certainly been an inspiration to all of us here at EdenHill, as well as so many people in the Greater New Braunfels area for many years,” said chaplain Rev. Sarah Currie. During pandemic lockdowns, Scoog interviewed fellow residents and staff to help establish EdenHill’s Community TV broadcast.

He spoke with them about their lives, and also contributed to the EdenHill newsletter with articles about New Braunfels’ history and heritage.

Also at the conference, EdenHill was presented with the 2023 Excellence in Community Service Award for the facility’s Alzheimer’s symposium.

CEO Wendy Carpenter said the event started because EdenHill employees were receiving so many calls from New Braunfels area residents looking for support.

The annual symposium brings together memory care specialists and senior medical experts to teach residents about the disease and available resources.

“Our team’s overriding goal was to create a very high-quality program with education, resources, making them free to the public and as easily accessible to the public as possible,” said marketing director Terry Jackson.

Music & Arts Fall Programs 2023

Summer Choir August 2023

Always wanted to try singing in choir? Here is your chance! This summer we will have four Sundays of Summer Choir! Anyone can participate - just show up to the choir room at 8:45am on Sunday morning where we will learn an easy two-part choir anthem to sing in the 9:30am worship service. This is a great way to meet new friends, try your hand at choral music and enjoy participating through song in worship. There is no commitment, you can attend one or all of our summer choir opportunities.

Sunday, August 6
Sunday, August 13
Sunday, August 20
Sunday, August 27

Adult Choir & Handbells

Adult Handbell Choir | Wednesdays from 6-7pm

Adult Sanctuary Choir | Wednesdays from 7-8:30pm

Older Teens and Adults are invited to participate in our music program at First Protestant with the Sanctuary Choir and FPC Handbell Choir. The Sanctuary Choir offers weekly choir anthems at the 9:30am service Sunday and our Adult Handbell Choir provides music on a monthly basis. Both groups offer music for special services including Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve and during Holy Week. Repertoire includes a broad mix of selections from sacred classics to new works by living composers. The First Protestant Sanctuary Choir & Handbell Choir 2023-2024 season will kick off with a social event on Friday, August 25th. To RSVP for the kickoff event, email Kirsten Boyd kirsten@firstprotestant.com.

Children & Youth Worship Arts Classes 2023-2024 11am - 12pm Sunday Mornings

This fall at First Protestant, our children and youth have the opportunity to participate in worship through cultivating their natural gifting during our 11am Worship Arts Classes. Students from preschool age through 8th grade can choose between music, arts and arts and technical theatre that will work towards presenting their skills as part of our Sunday worship services. The Worship Arts Classes at First Protestant honor the role of the church in training young people for leadership in worship.

Choir & Handbell students will learn practical vocal and listening skills, concentration and creativity, and will be exposed to diverse music styles in a variety of languages. Music groups will perform 3-4 times a semester, with special music for some holiday services. Our technical theatre students will support the Coll Street Players and theatrical presentations in worship by working on various technical aspects of the fall and spring productions. To register for your classes of choice, contact kirsten@firstprotestant.com or register at the Worship Arts Classes registration area on Sunday morning.

Time	Music	Music	Arts	Technical
11:00-11:30 am	Children's Choir (K-5th grade)	Youth Handbells (6-8th grade)	tba	Technical Theatre Workshop grades 4-8
11:30-12:00 pm	Youth Choir (6-8th grade) Preschool Choir (ages 3-5)	Children's Handbells (3-5th grade)	tba	



Coll Street Players 2023

Coll Street Players 2023

The Coll Street Players provide professional, thought-provoking live stage productions in the heart of historic New Braunfels, welcoming all who share a passion for the transforming power of theatre. The Coll Street Players are an entity of First Protestant Church. Website www.collstreetplayers.com and fall play auditions for *"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe"* coming soon!



First Protestant Music School

Community members of all ages are invited to take private music lessons at the new First Protestant Music School, kicking off Fall 2023! Whether you're a beginner or advanced musician, young child or adult, we have professional, experienced instructors available.



Our Private Lesson Coordinator can help you select a teacher, schedule a consistent weekly day and time for lessons, and set up a trial lesson* to ensure a good fit before committing to the remainder of the current semester (Fall, Spring or Summer). Be sure to read the Private Lesson Student Handbook for all our policies and procedures.

To learn more or setup a lesson, email kirsten@firstprotestant.com

*Please note that the Trial Lesson is a paid lesson

Blessings Where You Least Expect Them

by Sue Saur

I thought what I needed was just a bit of rest. A bit of “normal”. A reprieve from the hectic pace I found myself in when my dad’s health began to decline. Just the reality of that sentence still takes me by surprise. He had always been so full of energy and--projects. He had a spring in his step and a smile on his face as he sauntered through life with that confident gait, jingling the change in his pocket as he went. He was 88 and still working several days each week teaching test preparation classes for students working on their A&P (Airframe and Powerplant) licensing necessary to be an Aircraft Maintenance Technician.

And then he wasn’t.

Since October, “we” had been in and out of the hospital and rehab repeatedly. When he was “in”, I would sit with him in the mornings and evenings; his wife usually taking the day shift. We wanted to be there when the doctors came in--to help him make sense of the ever-lengthening ticker tape of new diagnoses and treatment options they presented. My dad, always the spiffy dresser, now donned jogging pants and house shoes, his saunter now a shuffle.

He usually slept in the afternoons but would be awake most evenings when I arrived. This man, who spent a lifetime being in control-- and now wasn’t, waxed reflective. We talked. A lot.

We talked about his life, his military career, his accomplishments, his regrets. We talked about current events, political candidates, church, how tall the corn in the field was, and how many inches of rain we got.

He reminisced about his childhood and mine.

We talked about relationships he treasured, and those still broken—and his angst over the uncertainty of mending them this side of eternity.

At nine o’clock most evenings as visiting hours came to an end, I would pat his head and kiss him goodnight, drive home to a quick shower and drop into bed, a hasty mental review of the next day’s activities and a prayer for the endurance to do it well, before I drifted off to sleep.

Our lives are punctuated with seasons such as this one. Mine involved an ailing parent; yours may be a sick child or spouse. Days or weeks...or months that require rerouting our activities and moving the boxes on our mental “planner” to allow us the opportunity to be available for that person.

continued...

Knowing some of the plates we are spinning will fall.

Counting the cost and then making the sacrifice. That's real love, isn't it? It's true for these somber seasons in our lives, but isn't it also true for much of our day to day? We could be sitting at someone's bedside, but we could also be working our jobs, folding the laundry, wiping faces, and fingers, and rears! Making the suppers or the breakfasts, jarring the jam, or mowing the lawn; each of these mundane tasks require a sacrifice of our time—pieces of our lives—in the service of others.

Paul encourages us in 1 Thessalonians to “give thanks in all circumstances.” He isn't saying to give thanks for all the circumstances of life—I am not being asked to be thankful my dad was sick, or that there is another stack of laundry to fold, or that the toddler spilled the milk, again. He is telling us there is blessing in all these circumstances to be noticed and appreciated, for which to be grateful.

Most of us will not have to sacrifice our life for another person or a cause—though some will. But each of us is challenged daily to sacrifice our lives a few minutes or hours at a time, to ease the life of someone else. And when we decide to make that sacrifice to be a blessing to others, we are blessed as well.

We think what we need is a bit of rest—and we may—but what God says we need is a life lived giving thanks.

I have been blessed by the conversations my dad and I had at the end of his life. Our relationship was deepened. I got to know the person who was my dad, better. Simply holding the water mug so he could take a drink eased his life, and I was grateful to be able to do it. And while, at the time, I was trying to figure out how to do that and fit everything else in—spoiler alert, I didn't! —I would not begrudge the time spent; the sacrifice made. Nor would you, I would guess given the same situation. Funny how blessings work. If you live your life trying to get one, it illudes you, but when you offer your life –pieces at a time--to be one, you are blessed beyond measure.

So, may I encourage you today—whether you are sitting with an ailing parent, or wiping up a toddler's spilled milk, whether you are volunteering in the church nursery, or you just gave your last \$5 to the guy on the corner, or any of the myriad of circumstances requesting your sacrifice—take a moment to rest, to be still, and consider how you have been blessed by being the blessing.

And give thanks.

Women's Ministries

From the desk of Celeste Salge
Women's Ministries



What do you get when you have a room full of beautiful women, stunning tables with all kinds of place settings, great guys serving, humor, excellent music, interesting speakers and encouragement to take the next step in your faith journey - abundant blessings!

The women's fellowship 's brunch on May 6, 2023 was a huge success. A big thank you to all who contributed and to those who attended. We look forward to more events like this in the future. Browse through the next couple of pages to experience a little of it.



FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH
172 W. Coll Street

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES BRUNCH

READY...SET...GO

SATURDAY, MAY 6

10:00 - 12:00

WITH LINDA STROM

DISCIPLESHIP UNLIMITED

TAKING THE NEXT STEP
IN OUR FAITH JOURNEY



TICKETS AVAILABLE AT SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE TIME
AND DURING OFFICE HOURS M-F \$25 EACH







Summer Training with the Ladies of *Flying Fingers*

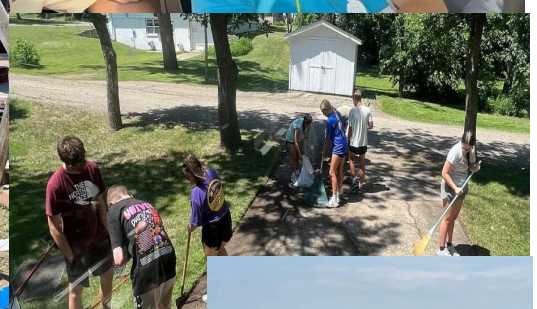
FLYING FINGERS
SUMMER FUN



The Stream 2023 Mission Trip

Pastor Tyler Reed

Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries



Coming this Fall!

September 17-23

Adult Mission Trip to Dearborn Michigan

Are you curious as to how to have conversations about Jesus with the Muslim Community? The Whitakers are eager to help us learn!

Join us! We have a few slots open!

Contact Sue Saur for more information:

sweetandsaur@aol.com





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172 West Coll Street
New Braunfels, TX 78130