



First Presbytery Church of Pasadena Celebrating 85 Years of Ministry and Mission

First Presbyterian Church of Pasadena, Texas was organized as a mission of Central Park Presbyterian Church (now Trinity/San Pablo Presbyterian Church) of Houston on November 22, 1936, with thirteen initial members: Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Poirrier, Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Fairfield, Mr. A. C. Massey, Miss Ruby Fuhlberg, and Mr. and Mrs. John Hunter and their five children.

The first few meetings were held at the Pasadena High School auditorium. When the Hunter family moved away, the remaining six almost gave up. However, the opening of Champion Paper Mill on the Houston Ship Channel brought many Presbyterians from North Carolina to work at the new plant, and the church began to grow. On January 3, 1937, the congregation moved to the Shell Union Hall on Shaver Street and called Rev. Walton G. Sugg as part-time minister with a salary of \$25 a month. In November 1937, they began meeting in the band hall of Jackson Junior High School (now De Zavala Middle School).

In June 1938, the mission church bought a lot on the southwest corner of Randall and Broadway for \$300. The band hall was purchased for \$150 and moved to the new lot at the cost of \$80. Several additions were made to the first church building with most of the labor provided by the men of the church. The lectern used in the fellowship hall today is the pulpit L. J. Etheridge made for the first church building.

On October 1, 1940, the Pasadena Presbyterian Church received its official beginning when it was chartered by Brazos Presbytery, PCUS (now Presbytery of New Covenant, PCUSA), and became a self-sustaining congregation. The Rev. Dr. Charles L. King, pastor of Houston's First Presbyterian Church, preached the inaugural sermon and suggested the name be changed to First Presbyterian Church, in order to become the first of more Presbyterian churches in the future. The Bible that Dr. King used in that service was donated to the church and is now displayed in the stained glass window cabinet in the narthex of the present building.

The 42 charter members included: Mr. & Mrs. Roy Alford; Mr. & Mrs. G. L. Boatright; Miss Nancy Boyd; Mrs. E. G. Bright; Mr. & Mrs. Horace W. Bunkley; Mr. & Mrs. C. M. Cobb, Jr.; Mr. & Mrs. E. O. Dirr; Mrs. Charles Dorris; Mrs. E. Y. Eliason and Margot; Mrs. L. J. Etheridge; Mr. & Mrs. G. A. Fairfield; Mr. L. Tom Fox; Miss Ruby Fuhlberg; Mr. Fred Furness; Mr. A. C. Massey; Mr. & Mrs. Crosby Matthews; Mrs. H. Leland

Murphy; Mr. & Mrs. J. M. Page; Mr. & Mrs. A. L. Poirrier and Louis; Mr. & Mrs. W. T. Storie, Elenora, Ted, and Betty; Mr. & Mrs. T. B. Walker and Jack; Mrs. J. S. Webb and Laura; and Mr. & Mrs. R H. Wilbourn.

Several of these families are represented by members of the present congregation. They include Diane Walker Hall, Johnnie Wamble Haltom (Webb family), and Margaret Dorris Bardin.

The congregation broke ground in 1949 for a new sanctuary at 1211 E. Harris Street, near Strawberry Road, and the buildings from Randall Street were moved behind the sanctuary to serve temporarily as classrooms and fellowship hall. In addition to the many potluck dinners held in the fellowship hall, there was even square dancing, which caused one unhappy family to leave. Eventually, new educational buildings, a fellowship hall, and a Boy Scout hut were completed by 1960. A new and larger sanctuary was built in 1968, and the old sanctuary was converted to chapel, bride's room, choir room, library, and offices with attic space above. The pipe organ was installed in 1978.

In addition to enormous growth at First Presbyterian, two new churches were established and supported in Pasadena: in 1955, Eastminster Presbyterian Church (now an active Hispanic church) at 403 Preston Road, and in 1958, Faith Presbyterian Church at 2301 South Houston/Pasadena Road. By 1963 there were over 1000 Presbyterian saints in Pasadena churches! After NASA moved to Clear Lake City in 1963, several hundred more Presbyterians joined all three churches.

First Presbyterian moved again to the current location at the corner of Preston Road and Crenshaw Road. The new building was dedicated on August 16, 1998. Large stained-glass windows were added in 1999 and 2001. The Holy Grounds Coffee Café was opened in June of 2005.

Presbyterian Women began in 1939 as a Ladies' Auxiliary and now meets monthly from August to May as a Day Circle and a Night Circle for Bible study and fellowship. They continue to provide many acts of service to the church family and community.

The Early Childhood Program, under the Discipleship Ministry, was begun in 1958 as a daily kindergarten and continues today with classes for ages 3 months to 4 years of age.

In 1978, The Bridge over Troubled Waters, a shelter for women in crisis and their children, was founded by Carolyn and Bob Russell of First Presbyterian Church and Nancy and Roy Penney of Eastminster Church, who later became members of F.P.C.

A Vietnamese refugee family, Quang Le Tan, his wife, Gi Nguyen, and their four children, were brought to Pasadena in 1979. Church members provided them with a home, furnishings, jobs, health care, and other assistance until they were well established and thriving on their own. They continued as active members of the congregation for many years.

Pasadena Interfaith Manor, an apartment complex for low-income senior adults, was built in 1981, as the result of the long-term efforts of three local groups – First Presbyterian Church, Knights of Columbus, and B'nai B'rith. It is the only retirement facility in the United States that was built and continues as a project of these faiths.

Youth mission trips have included work and learning experiences in South Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Louisiana, California, and New Mexico.

The current community of 191 members continue to glorify God and serve, love, and care for others. Some of the outreaches of the church include participation in and/or support of Pasadena Habitat for Humanity, Pasadena Community Ministries, Kairos Prison Ministry, Presbyterian International Seafarer Ministry, Pasadena Interfaith Manor, veterans at the DeGeorge at Union Station and Tunnels to Tower, and the ministries/missions of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. In addition, FPCP hosts Brown Bag and Bible study, senior activities and trips, yoga classes, a prayer shawl ministry, a quilting/sewing class, a crafting group, a monthly book group, and Taco and a Prayer.



Ministers of First Presbyterian Church, Pasadena 1936-2025

Ministers

J. Martin Singleton	1942
John E. Parse	1946
Harry L. Johnson	1963
Dr. George K. Kluber	1975
Dr. Robert Garwig	1996
Jeffrey H. Smith	2002
Dean Pogue	2006
Dr. James S. Currie	2010
Dr. Fairfax F. Fair	2019

Associate Ministers

Richard Poteet	1965
Patricia McClurg	1969
Charlotte Kibler	1982

Assistant Ministers

David Jordan	1956
James Shott	1958

Supply Pastors

Walton G. Sugg	1937
H. Leland Murphy	1939
Dr. Charles L. King	1974

Interim Ministers

Patrick Abrams	1995
Stephen Rehrig	2000

Parish Associate

Patrick Abrams	2004
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Intern Associate Ministers

Ted Foote	1977
Tim Ferrell	1978
Walker Westerlage, Jr.	1979
Kevin Keaton	1980
Ken Mahaffey	1981
Gordon Butler	1987
Deborah Dill	1988
Kristine Brantley	1989
Richard Culp	1990
Scott Simpson	1992