

# First Press

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OCEAN CITY, NEW JERSEY



## A NOTE FROM PASTOR LUKE

Dear Church Family,  
As summer approaches, many of us look forward to simple joys: time with family, games with friends, and restful days at the beach. These are good gifts from God. But they also remind us of a deeper question: where do we find our greatest joy?

The Westminster Shorter Catechism begins with a beautiful answer: our chief end is “to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” Psalm 37:4 expresses this same truth:

*Delight yourself in the Lord,  
and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

At first, that verse can sound as though God promises to give us whatever we want if we obey him. But that is not the point. Psalm 37 is not teaching us to treat God like a means to some other reward. Rather, it invites us to delight in the Lord himself—to know him, trust him, and love him. He should be the deepest desire of our hearts.

The psalm begins by telling us not to fret because of evildoers. Later, it calls us to wait patiently for the Lord, even when the wicked seem to prosper. In other words, this is not a promise that life will always go smoothly for those who trust God. It is a reminder. Even in a broken world filled with disappointment, waiting, and uncertainty, we can still find true joy in him.

That is my encouragement to you this summer: delight in the Lord. Not because you hope to get something from him, but because in Christ you already belong to him. He is your Father, your Shepherd, and your lasting portion. Let the joy of the Lord be your strength.

How do we grow in that delight? We grow as we open His Word, not merely out of duty, but to know him better. We grow as we love his people and share life with his church. We grow as we walk in obedience and listen for his voice.

So, whether you are sitting on the beach, traveling with family, or enjoying quiet days at home, I encourage you to ask: how can I make the Lord the delight of my heart this summer?

-Pastor Luke Bert



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### FIND FEN!

The Bert Family dog is hidden somewhere in the newsletter, can you find him?



# INTRODUCING CARLOS AND LILY SAAVEDRA



Carlos and Lily were missionaries for the Christian Missionary Alliance Church in Mexico, Paraguay and the US. In 2024, they started praying for the right mission to return to Mexico. They received an opportunity to serve with World Gospel Mission in Aguascalientes, Mexico. They started fundraising in March 2025 and were amazed by God's goodness that they were able to get funded by September so their kids could start school in Mexico.

World Gospel Mission had a small group of 2 families in Aguascalientes who formed a small church. When Carlos and Lily arrived as church leaders, the numbers quickly increased and the space was too small for the

number of attendees. Carlos was looking for land to build or a building that would be large enough for the church. He found a perfect building that had good parking, near public transport stops and space for the church, missionary training center and outreach. The building was, however, very costly and he didn't want to put the church in debt.

Carlos started a fund for the building and raised about 10% of the total cost. The owner was becoming impatient and said she could not wait any longer. By God's grace, a person was led by the Holy Spirit to buy the building and said he would rent it to the church until the church had enough money to buy it. Carlos was thankful that the church would have more time to make the full payment without going into debt.

World Gospel Mission in Aguascalientes is also doing outreach to local orphanages, hospitals and drug rehab facilities. They hope to train Mexican nationals as missionaries as well as invite other nationalities to complete mission training in Aguascalientes. They will be hosting short-term mission groups to help with the rehab of the church building. Finally, they would like to start hydroponic gardens at the center to help supply vegetables for church events and outreach.

Carlos and Lily are very thankful for all God has done in Aguascalientes. They are thankful that church goers are seeing God moving and want to join in the work. They are awed by the generosity of the local and international community in supporting their work.



**CHURCH BUILDING PURCHASE**  
AGUASCALIENTES, MEXICO

World Gospel Mission  
3783 E. State Road 18  
P.O. Box 948  
Marion, IN 46952-0948  
Donnor ID # 08020  
Check should be made out to World Gospel Mission with AGUASCALIENTES CHURCH in the memo.

**\$420,000**  
5,708/sq. ft

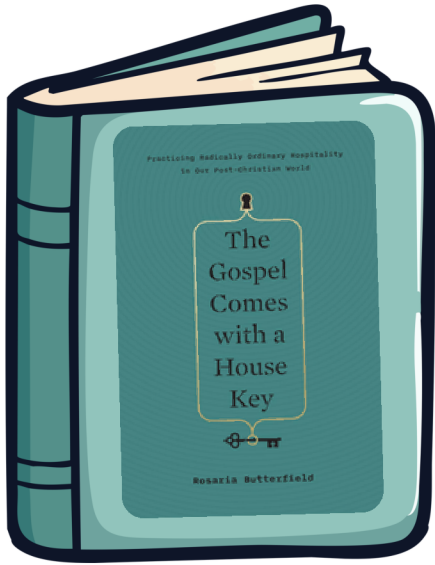
**READY TO USE**

For more information:  
Carlos & Lily Saavedra  
856-776-6482

[wgm.org/mexico-new-church-building](http://wgm.org/mexico-new-church-building)

# FIRST PRES 2026 SUMMER READING CLUB

Join the M&E Committee this summer in reading,  
“The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World”  
by Rosaria Butterfield.



Sign up to join on the bulletin board in the Welcome Center by **June 15th** to receive a book or be matched with a reading buddy.

You can read along with a friend or join the discussion group! Meetings will be at First Pres for an indoor picnic & discussion. Bring your own sandwich or salad to eat while we discuss the book.

*July 15th from 6:00pm - 7:30pm*  
(Discussing Chapters 1 - 5)

*August 12th from 6:00pm - 7:30pm*  
(Discussing Chapters 6 - 10)

## NEW APP AND WEBSITE!

We're thrilled to share that a brand-new church website and app are going live anyday!

This exciting tool will make it easier than ever to:

*Find contact info for fellow members and church leadership*

*View a full calendar of church events and gatherings*

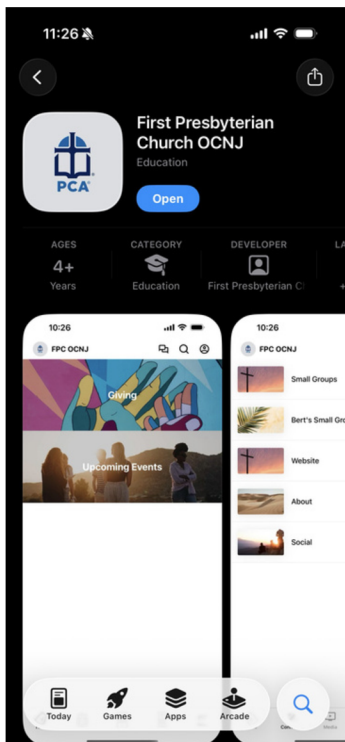
*Share and respond to prayer requests in real time*

It's designed to help us grow closer as a church family, stay informed, lift one another up, and deepen our fellowship.

### Church App!

Have you downloaded our church app yet?

- Go to your Google or Apple App Store or Roku TV
- Search “First Presbyterian Church OCNJ”
- The image on the app is the PCA logo
- Download
- Create Account
- Here you will be able to watch sermons, make prayer requests, connect, read the bible and have access to online giving.



# JUNE

# JULY

# AUGUST

- 1. Connie Young
- 3. Rebekah Bert
- 4. Natalie Murphy
- 7. Bill Weisberg
- 8. Nick Loesch
- 9. Matthias Bert
- 15. Margot Osmianski
- 18. Brad Young
- 21. Pastor Dan Unrath
- 21. Thomas Olandt
- 23. Beth Colvin
- 28. Owen Andrew Colvin
- 30. Patricia Phillips

- 7. Sue Weisberg
- 9. Richard Colvin
- 11. Alex Szalku
- 11. Karen Eachus
- 18. Jacob Newsome
- 18. Emily Newsome
- 19. Gary Griffith
- 23. Joshua Karl Carmona

- 2. Pat Donlevy
- 2. Neil Jordan
- 3. Ben Sheldon
- 5. Jane Shea
- 8. Dan Ahmad
- 10. Gary Degenhardt
- 21. Shane Gillet
- 21. Hadley Grace Ali
- 23. Cecilia Unrath
- 27. Kristen Ali

*Leena Carmona*

Born: March 29, 2026

Daughter of

Karl and Sindhu Carmona  
Granddaughter of  
Rick Carmona

*Cleo Juliet Griffith-Kopec*

Born: April 1, 2026

Daughter of

Sam and Marty Kopec  
Granddaughter of  
Gary and Sharon Griffith

*Asher Colvin*

Born: May 18, 2026

Son of

Ryan and Olivia Colvin  
Grandson of  
Kim and Gretchen Murphy  
& Rich and Beth Colvin.



Why should you become a **member** of the church? While the phrase church member is not used in the Bible, the reality of committed belonging to Christ's church is found throughout Scripture. Church membership matters because the Christian life is meant to be lived in **community**. Christ gathers his people into a body, a family, and a flock. To join a local church is more than simply attending worship. It is a way of saying, **"This is the people of God with whom I will worship, grow, serve, and share life."**

Here are a few reasons membership is important:

Scripture calls us to gather faithfully with God's people (Heb. 10:25).

The church is where we use our gifts to serve one another (1 Cor. 12:12-20).

The teaching ministry of the church helps us grow in truth and guards us from error (Eph. 4:9-16).

## New Member Class This Fall!

God calls his people to live under the loving care of shepherds (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

If you believe God may be calling you to make **First Pres your church home**, I warmly encourage you to consider the **new members class**. Membership is a meaningful commitment to Christ and to his people here. It is one way we say that we belong to one another in the Lord.

Details about the next class will be shared soon, likely after the summer season. This class is open not only to those ready to pursue membership, but also to anyone who would like to learn more about First Pres and the PCA. Whether you are new or have been attending for some time, **you are very welcome to come**.

# Vacation Bible School

August  
3rd - 7th  
9:00am - 12:15pm



Journey through Ireland in Emerald Crossing, where Psalm 23 comes to life! Kids will explore God as Shepherd, Guide, Comforter, Provider, and King through Bible Study, Songs, Crafts, Puppets, and much more. Each day reveals how God leads, protects, and provides. Join the adventure! This years VBS will be held August 3rd - 7th, from 9:00am to 12:15pm. Children ages 4 through 6th grade are welcome to join us and can pre-register at:

<https://firstpresocnj.myanswers.com/emerald-crossing/>

## Art Nights

May 27

June 3, June 17

July 1, July 15, July 29

August 2 - VBS Set Up



# Sunday Setlist



## Everlasting God

Chris Tomlin

## As The Deer

The Worship Initiative (ft Shane & Shane)

## God Really Loves Us

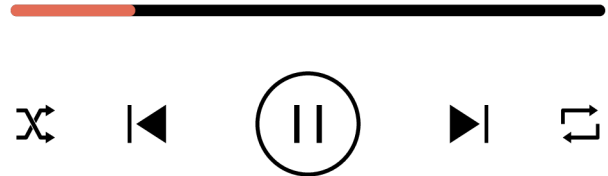
Crowder

## Count Every Blessing

Rend Collective

## If We Are The Body

Casting Crowns



## Cinnamon-Scented Icebox Cake

- 1 - (2 to 3oz) box cook-and-serve chocolate pudding
- 4 - cups whole milk, divided (for puddings)
- 1 - 14oz. box cinnamon graham crackers
- 1 - (2 to 3oz) box cook-and-serve vanilla pudding
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 tsp. fine sea salt
- 1/2 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

### Instructions:







- Prepare chocolate pudding per pkg. directions.
- In 9- by 13-in. baking dish, arrange 1 layer of graham crackers in bottom, breaking as needed to cover entire dish (6 to 7 crackers total).
- Spread chocolate pudding evenly over graham crackers.
- Prepare vanilla pudding per pkg. directions.
- Meanwhile, arrange second layer of graham crackers over chocolate pudding, breaking as necessary (7 to 8 crackers total). Spread vanilla pudding evenly over graham crackers. Cover and refrigerate overnight, up to 2 days.
- When ready to serve, using electric mixer, beat heavy cream, confectioners' sugar and salt until soft peaks form, 1 to 1.5 min. Spread evenly over vanilla pudding.
- Using fine-mesh sieve, sift cocoa powder and cinnamon over whipped cream.



# JUNE

**Every Sunday:  
9:00 am - Sunday School  
10:30 am - Worship**

Please remove from the newsletter and put on your fridge at home so you don't miss any of the exciting things happening at First Pres!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	 3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	 12	13
14	15	16	 17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
 28 AWR	29	30				

**Wednesday, June 3 & 17: VBS Art Night**

7:00pm - 9:00pm | All are welcome | Fellowship Hall  
Drawing, painting, puppets and constructing! Wear your painting clothes!

**Wednesday, June 12: Shuffle Board & Ice Cream**

6:00pm - 8:00pm | All are welcome | Meet at Church  
If it rains, we will play board games at church

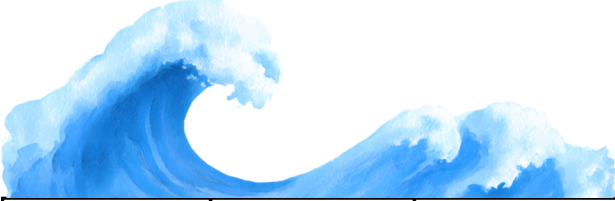







**If you are in sports:** please mark your name, home game dates, time, and where the game will play, on the calendar outside of Mr. Murphy's office!

**If you are in any kind of production:** please invite Mr. Murphy to come to your performance! Also, please mark these dates and location on the calendar outside of Mr. Murphy's office.

# JULY

**Every Sunday:  
9:00 am - Sunday School  
10:30 am - Worship**

Please remove from the newsletter and put on your fridge at home so you don't miss any of the exciting things happening at First Pres!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 	25
26 	27	28 	29 	30 	31	

**Wednesday, July 1 & 15: VBS Art Night**

7:00pm - 9:00pm | All are welcome | Fellowship Hall  
Drawing, painting, puppets and constructing! Wear your painting clothes!

**Tuesday - Thursday, July 28 - 30: VBS Prep**

1:00pm - 4:00pm | All are welcome | Fellowship Hall  
Bring board games for those times when there is nothing to do.

**Friday - Sunday, July 24 - 26: Youth and Family Tubing Weekend**

Friday - Leave church at 10am for Belleplaine State Forest  
Saturday - Tubing at Winding River | Space is limited, please RSVP ASAP  
Sunday - Campsite worship and clean up!

8 Cost: \$100/person (includes food, tubing, and camping) - Sign up in Welcome Center  
Age: any age with parent or 5<sup>th</sup> grade and up

# AUGUST

**Every Sunday:**  
**9:00 am - Sunday School**  
**10:30 am - Worship**

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
 2	3	4				8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
 23 AWR	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**Sunday August 2: VBS Set-Up**

2:00pm - 4:00pm | All are welcome | Fellowship Hall | Dinner provided  
 Set up, decorate, get ready for Vacation Bible School! Wear your work clothes!

**Sunday August 3 - 7: Vacation Bible School**

9:00am - 12:30pm | See page 5 for details

**Upcoming for September:**

September 26 at 12:00pm: Church Picnic at Belleplain State Forest Lake Pavilion

First Presbyterian Church  
701 Wesley Ave  
Ocean City, NJ 08226

To:

**First Press**  
**June / July / August**  
**2026 Newsletter**