

First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

First Press

In this issue

Pastor's Page2
Notes3
Wiens' Endowment4
Session Highlights5
Celebrations5
Deacon Notes6
Food Distribution6
Food Volunteers7
Retreat Opportunity.7&8
Presbytery Highlights9

And the Table Will Be Wide: A Blessing for World Communion Sunday

And the table will be wide. And the welcome will be wide. And the arms will open wide to gather us in. And our hearts will open wide to receive.

And we will come as children who trust there is enough. And we will come unhindered and free. And our aching will be met with bread. And our sorrow will be met with wine. And we will open our hands to the feast without shame. And we will turn toward each other without fear. And we will give up our appetite for despair. And we will taste and know of delight.

And we will become bread for a hungering world. And we will become drink for those who thirst. And the blessed will become the blessing. And everywhere will be the feast.

--Jan Richardson

Page 2 Pastor's Page



Sabbatical Update

Japan announced they are reopening to individual visitors on Oct 11. So, we missed it by inches, but Bethany and I will have a grand adventure in western Canada, Banff and Lake Louise. We will be away for two weeks. One surprise



discovery is that the woman who mentored my cohort three years ago for Forest Bathing lives 25 minutes from my hotel and guides in Banff park all the time! So Bethany and I have arranged an afternoon walk with her one day, and I am doing a solo mini-retreat with her another day (called "Mountain

Solace", it is designed for leaders. I could use some solace!) This feels like a lovely inclusio: beginning Oct 1-8 2019 with Ronna, and ending with her Oct 1-8 2022.

Fall!

It is truly Fall! It seems the weeks in the Fellowship Hall have flown by, and I cannot believe next Sunday is World Communion...

I am deeply grateful for three things as this comes to a close:

1) the cheerful, intrepid willingness of this community to gather, sing with open hearts, and welcome new things like Craig the Bass Baritone or Threshold Choir. We did this to address a problem, but it became a source of joy.

2) grateful for the willingness of the tech team and set-up crew and musicians for their ability to adapt and to make this seamless and efficient, even though it meant more work (setting out chairs, winding up cords...etc.) Also safety team and ushers, etc.

3) grateful that the congregation was able on Sunday to speak of the gift of sitting near one another, of intimacy and connection and surprise and gratitude. When we can find Grace in the frustrations (rather than blaming someone, being furious, etc) it is a great strength for moving forward in uncharted territory.

Sally Morris Humanitarian Award

Many of you heard me announce that Tom Rennard received an award. I would like to say another word about that. Sally and Pat founded our chapter of Habitat in this valley decades ago, and so her death was a great blow to the organization. A member of the Board called Pat and asked if he would be angry if they remembered Sally by creating an award in her honor. He agreed to discuss it. Some weeks later they called again saying: we think we have just the person to receive the award: how about Tom, who used to be our Executive Director? Pat said the idea was "a match made in heaven" pointing out that Sally and Tom understood each other: leaders who lead from a place of humility, without ego-involvement. And so it was that Tom and I were invited to the gala, and Pat got up to present the award,

and called Tom's name. Tom was astounded, and it was a moment filled with grace. The presence of Sally's family, the continuation of her legacy of service with integrity and kindness, Tom's surprise and delight- grace upon grace. If there is a better award, I cannot imagine what it might be!

As I prepare to get on a plane, I am reminding myself of this congregation who knows how to lift their hearts to God and love one another on folding chairs- finding joy and surprise even in a less-than-gorgeous space. I am going to carry that spirit of openness to what God might want to say and do in the place where I am, without grieving too much over where I could not go.



~Sandy

Notes



Wanted: Fruits, Veggies, Beans, and Pasta Your food ministry thanks you for your donations of canned fruit. We are also now out of canned veggies, canned beans,



and are almost out of pasta! Soups, stews or chilis with veggies or beans work too! Check those cupboards! Or slip an extra can or 2 into your cart?

Thanks to the San Bernardino Retired Employees who met here for a lunch on Tuesday and provided a table of food for our food closet.

If you have an excess of fresh fruits or veggies, coordinate with Rick to bring in on a Monday or Wednesday so we distribute it fresh. How much? We are serving 40-50 households per Tuesday or Thursday.

The food ministry also continues to need and to use your donated grocery bags. Thank you!

Financial Notes

Financial Report as of August 31, 2022. General Fund

oonoran rana			
	Actual	Budgeted	Over/(Under)
Pledges	\$263,657.26	266,924.00	(3,266.74)
Other Income*	\$145,358.69	33,040.72	112,317.97
Expense	\$356,433.16	360,193.40	(3,760.24)
Net Income	\$ 52,582.79	(60,228.68)	121,811.47

*Other Income includes 26,182.92 from sale of office building at 1875 N D.

Division Consolidation

	August	Year to date
General Fund Net Income (Expense)	(16,135.32)	52,582.79
Deacons Net Income (Expense)	(1,509.17)	(1,274.48)
NET OPERATING INCOME (EXPENSI	E)(17,644.49)	51,308.31

The *First Press*, the newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino, is edited by Wendy Lamb. Please submit content to Wendy at newsletter@fpcsb.net. **The deadline for the following month's newsletter is the 15th of each month.**

Livestream, Sound, Camera Techs Needed

Hello church family,

As you all know, we have been live streaming our worship services, other services and events. This is a vital ministry for communicating what we do at our church especially since Covid started.

It is a very important ministry and we are in need for others to join our Tech team. It is fun and really simple to do. We will provide those that are interested with the training to be successful in this ministry.

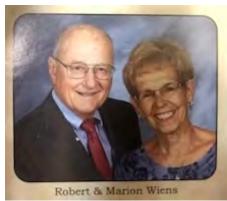
We are in the need for Livestream tech person, Camera persons, and sound board operators.

You can participate in this ministry more often or less often as you like. Or we can put you on a regular schedule.

If you are interested please see James on Sunday before or after the worship service and he can schedule a time to start your training. Or you can leave him a message with your contact info by calling the church office. We look forward to hearing and working with you.

The Robert and Marion Wiens Endowment for Congregational Enrichment

This is the second of several articles on endowment funds at the church. These designated funds help pay for specific programs -- Margaret Doane, Stewardship



Bob and Marion Wiens became members of First Pres San Bernardino in 1989 but had never lived in San Bernardino or even in an adjacent city. These Yucaipa residents, together with their dear friends, Jeannie and Larry Marona, were looking for a new church home and visited many churches of many denominations. The foursome made the decision to attend our church, so distant from their homes, after hearing Jim Huffstutler preach a single time.

Bob and Marion met at the University of Redlands. He majored in Accounting and she in Elementary Education, and they married in 1956, right after Bob graduated. Marion briefly taught elementary school and junior high but "mostly has been a homemaker." Bob became a banker and opened a branch of Redlands Federal Savings and Loan at 26. Bob was a highly respected banker in Redlands and worked for Redlands Federal for 38 years. He retired at 58

following a stroke. He worked extremely hard to overcome the effects of the stroke and "recovered quite a bit in the first year" and eventually did "amazingly well," says Marion. Bob and Marion moved to Plymouth Village in 2009, and Bob died in November 2017 on a plane while journeying home from a vacation in Hawaii, having, says Marion, "used up every drop of life."

Bob and Marion were married for 61 1/2 years. Marion, her "pride showing here," says of their children that "Gordon is a banker of 41 years with the same employer; Steve is a senior executive in the insurance industry; and Nancy is a PhD in Spirituality and the Natural Sciences and an ordained Presbyterian minister." Gordon is married to Margie; Steven to Becky; and Nancy to Sam. Bob and Marion have five grandchildren, Ryan, Andy, Jacob, Robert, and Erin; and two great grandchildren, Caroline and Lucy. Nancy's daughter, Erin Wiens St. John, attended our church during the years she was a student at the University of Redlands; she sang in the choir and preached an impressive sermon.

Bob was very active in the church, and Marion continues to be active. Bob was an Elder, sang in the choir, and served on various financial advisory committees. Marion sings in the choir, is a leader in Kerygma, and guides the administration of the Wiens Fund. The Robert and Marion Wiens Endowment for Congregational Enrichment was established in 1998 to "bring speakers to . . .[the Church] for the enrichment of the congregation's spiritual life." The fund pays for "the speaker's honorarium, travel, and housing expenses." Generally, speakers have come during Lent; in addition to the speakers, the Fund also developed the Lenten Quiet Nights series with a service of prayers, scripture and readings, followed by a soup and bread supper. Although the Fund generally has been used for enrichment speakers during Lent, money from the Fund can be used at any time of the year for speakers and programming "to enhance the spiritual growth of the congregation." (See Wiens' funded retreat opportunity on pages 7 and 8.)

Keep Military Members in Your Prayers

LCpl Jacob Allen, US Marine Corps, Cherry Point, North Carolina

> **PFC Jeremy Allen**, US Marine Corps, Okinawa, Japan

Seaman Mark Munz, US Navy, San Diego, California

Private Javier Rocha, US Army, Fort Benning, Georgia

Seaman Robert Sandoval, US Navy, Virginia

Petty Officer Noah L. Wierenga, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Upper Mississippi River

> **CW3 James Bentley Wilson**, US Army, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington

Cadet Grace Wilson Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Session Highlights from August

by Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

We began this hybrid meeting with a prayer Sandy offered for the opening of the SB County Board of Supervisors and a reflection on the lectionary passage for Sunday, August 28th in which Paul is lamenting how so many have deserted him. It was pointed out that this is not unlike our church where so many we have relied on for so many years have moved out of the area - thinking specifically of the Donald and Earleen, Larry and Melodee, and Lynette. We were also reminded that God shows up in ordinary things - we do not always need to see angels in front of us to see the face of God! In the words of one of my favorite chants - we see the face of God wherever we turn. Sandy shared that Tom will retire from pastoring at Bridges Fellowship in Big Bear at the end of December and wishes to join us in worship if we are willing. Of course, we welcome him wholeheartedly and look forward to his voice coming down from the choir! Plans were discussed for Celebration and Reunion Sunday on September 11th to include the Deacons Blood Drive, fingerprinting for officers and those working with youth and children and opportunities to volunteer for the many facets of this We also spent time exploring the history of our church. Endowment Funds and how to streamline them to preserve the wishes of the donors and keep our books clearer! As always, we closed with reflections on the meeting which included a comment from a person on the search committee that called Sandy saying that committee longed for a pastor who would be involved in the community and Sandy has done that with her work at SBHS as well as her meaningful prayer to the SB County gathering earlier this week.



Last year we celebrated Reformation Sunday outside with pipes, drums, and dancing. Come celebrate Reformation Sunday on October 30.

October Birthdays and Anniversaries

Oct 2 Julie Aguilera Jacob Matthew Kern Dave Thomas Jean Wierenga Oct 4 Jennifer (Coyne) Scerra Lisa (Coyne) Star Oct 5 **Caleb** Christopher Jones Oct 7 Carmen Avila Edward Munz **Phyllis Hough** Oct 9 Jerry Patterson Oct 11 Zachary Garcia Oct 12 Mimi Lange Jeoff Molcan **Owen Morris** Oct 17 Jacob Babcock **Bobbi Cummings** Oct 20 **Robin Edwards** Oct 21 Marilyn Kraft Oct 22 Adam Nord Neal Williams Oct 23 Thomas Patrick Dunn Adelaide Shenton Oct 24 Geri Atkins Oct 28 Joshua Fletcher Oct 29 Deanna Long Oct 30 Mario & Mary Bolaños Rebecca Allen

 Sandy Tice, Moderator; Wendy Lamb, CLP; Amy Smith, Clerk of Session Class of 2022: Carol Cooper, Margaret Doane, Stephanie Fletcher Class of 2023: Jeanne Clarke, Susan Skoglund, Alex Smith, Tim Usher
Class of 2024: Mary Bolaños, Brooke Dvorak, Patrick Morris, Martha Pinckney

Session 2022

Surprise Blessings, by Rick Rodriguez, Deacon, Food MInistry

We had our volunteer Sunday on September 11th. One young and enthusiastic face, Sarah Fletcher, and her Dad, John-Paul, volunteered to help the Food Ministry. On some Sundays, John-Paul and Sarah will be a big help by making some bags of food we need for our Tuesday Food Giveaway. This truly is a blessing.

Unfortunately, they were the only new food volunteers to sign up that day (but it is not too late! Contact me!) Fortunately, we have a group of dedicated members of our church family who volunteer their time, their vehicles, their ideas, and sometimes even their family, friends, and neighbors, to keep the Food Ministry running. Since the number of church member volunteers has gone down in recent years, I was, and still am, hoping to identify at least 6 new member volunteers we could call on to help with various tasks.



That Sunday was less than a week before our monthly Saturday Food Distribution on Saturday, September 17th. So, as part of assembling the Saturday volunteer list, I invited a new member of LifeSkillz to volunteer on Saturday. Her name is Liliana Aceves, a freshman at San Bernardino High School, and younger sister to Ariana and Elvira, LifeSkillz alums and interns. Liliana wanted to know if two other LifeSkillz freshmen, Maraie Soto and Analucia Quevedo could come and volunteer too. They all came and worked hard, with smiles on their faces, bringing a breath of fresh air to our Food Distribution. They were a blessing to other experienced volunteers, including me.

The volunteers that came to help, and that the Food Ministry needs, ended up coming from someplace I didn't expect. It seems God brings the blessings you need exactly when you need them. So, I'll continue to ask, and the invitation remains open. Remember, several of the important tasks that need to get done in the Food Ministry require no lifting and can be done while sitting in a chair.

From Your Deacon Board

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Blood Drive on Sunday Morning and those who went to the Donor Center. We brought in 14 Units.

Deacons are collecting Toothbrushes and Toothpaste to be donated to The Salvation Army Hospitality House. They will be collecting these items through October 31. A basket will be made available on Sunday morning for your donation.

The Peace & Global Witness Offering

This offering is received during the Season of Peace, which ends on World Communion Sunday. A gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this Offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace. Our Deacons have decided to donate this portion of the offering to the San Bernardino Police Foundation to be used for their youth programs. Mid councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

Board of Deacons 2022

Rebecca Allen, Moderator; Steve Smith, Pastoral Support

Class of 2022: Mark Adelson, Carmen Avila, Janet McKinster

Class of 2023: Rebecca Allen, Sharon Landeros, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Chris Wright Thomas **Class of 2024:** Dan Direen, Robin Edwards, Marianna Fowles, Richard Rodriguez, Katie Smith

More Food Characters

by Marilyn Kraft

You might remember "Helpful Henry" from last month. Did you ask Rick? Ok, the big reveal "Henry" is Frank Thomas, Dave's Dad. And he is a delight, as you might imagine.

We said you didn't have to be 92 to help in food ministry. You could be a youngster like...

"Solid Sue"

Sue gives consistent support, even while recovering from an injury. She should not, and so does not, lift full bags. She has doubled up grocery bags, written reports we turn into CAP every month, called the organizations on resource list to verify services and hours, and fills as many bags as she feels good doing each week. How? She puts food items into bags. Other volunteers happily make sure the food is accessible, and then move the full bags to Room 12.

You don't need to be injured to help with food ministry! You could be...

"Amazing Anna"

Anna could be any of three former very experienced interns. Anna uses "Clifford" (the new big red pallet unloader) & our pallet jack to unload and move thousands of pounds of food. She registers participants, makes every type of kit, stocks the food closet, inventories & labels food, assists participants, bags shelf-stable and cold foods, and performs just about any task in the food program.

You don't need to be an intern to help with food ministry! You could be...

"Faithful Fred"

On Tuesdays Fred puts out and removes signs, restocks wagons, and bags cold food. Sometimes he helps unload trucks. You might not know him well, but you do know his mother.

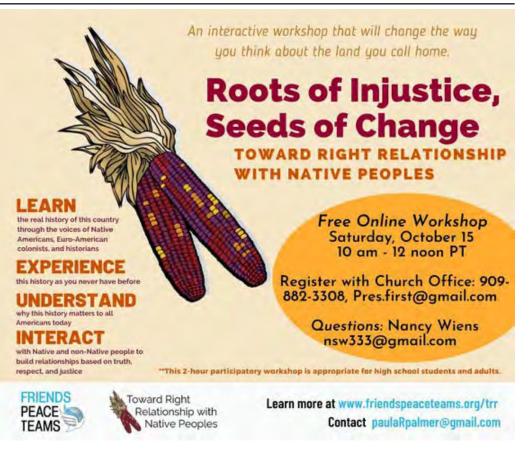
You don't need to be a member or even related to a member to help in food ministry!

We regularly have neighbors who come at the invitation of other volunteers to join them because it feels good.

If you can volunteer, please contact Rick. He'll confirm the identities of these characters.

Thanks to each one of you for supporting the food ministry through general tithes & offerings (food ministry uses the electricity & staff support Deacon offerings too!), (partnership fees, truck rental, bags & other supplies), donations of food & hygiene supporting supplies. the internship program (TGFI -Thank God for Interns!), staff tasks like maintenance & accounting, your gift of time as a leader or volunteer, and your prayers for our people.

It matters that we are here in this neighborhood, doing this work, in a spirit of kindness & kinship.



Learning to See the Land and Our Neighbors More Clearly

Information for the morning online session is on the previous page. Register for either or both with the Church office by Wednesday, October 12th. The afternoon, in-person retreat will be led by Nancy Wiens, who says:

With the support of the Session, I have been partnering with First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino to love our neighbors through Indigenous Revitalization. In good Presbyterian style, I have focused on education as a doorway toward honest and humble relationships. It is a challenging process to unlearn what is commonly taught about California history and specifically the Mission history, which preceded our Presbyterian Churches in California. I am learning to support changing the familiar narratives and to create opportunity to hear Indigenous stories.

As people with beautiful hearts, intelligent minds, and bodies committed to standing with those on the margins of society, you all are dear partners in exploring it together. Your long-term commitment to the Food Pantry ministry and Life Skillz are ways you love your neighbors deeply. This learning to see the land and our neighbors more clearly is a courageous and loving next step.

An in-person retreat highlighting the presence of:

Suanne Ware-Diaz (Kiowa), Sylvia Mendivil Salazar (Pascua Yaqui/ Akimel O'odham), Christina Salazar (Tongva Gabrielino)

LISTEN to insights and experiences of others

REFLECT with times of silence & journaling

RESPOND to what the Spirit is telling you



Nurturing Seeds of Change

LEARNING TO SEE THE LAND AND OUR NEIGHBORS MORE CLEARLY

Free Retreat Saturday, October 15 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

at First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino 1900 N D St, San Bernardino

Register with Church Office

<u>Pres.first@gmail.com</u> or (909) 882-3308 by 10/12/2022

Bring: a journal (optional) Questions: Nancy Wiens, nsw333@gmail.com

Please also join us for the 10 am - 12 noon Zoom workshop, Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change.

Presbytery of Riverside Assembly September 10, 2022 Highlights

by Mary Bolaños, Commissioner to Presbytery

The September presbytery meeting was held in hybrid fashion—both on Zoom and in person at First Church Redlands and opened with worship while waiting for a quorum. The reflection was based on Gal 3:28 "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." It was noted that the offering would go to PDA to benefit Ukrainian Refugee Relief.

• Synod Partnership Grants- \$298,000 available:

After a very lengthy discussion, the assembly approved the amended amount of \$120,000(reduced from \$200,000) for First Church Redlands to help fund the project to make their facility viable for concerts and other community events. The primary reason to amend the original amount was that \$200,000 is 2/3 of the total amount available and the Presbytery would like funds to be available for other congregations. Other congregations either may not have been aware of these funds or maybe not aware that the grant could be used in the way Redlands is proposing. Further discussion included noting that we all have aging buildings in need of repair; use of the facility will not be free to the community; the community will be invited to contribute to the project. Opinions differ as to the appropriateness of this project as it pertains to our Matthew 25 philosophy---some wonder how it aligns with dismantling racism or ending poverty while others see it as creative and revitalizing. The grant will be re-submitted to the Synod for approval.

• Our Presbytery's Mission Assessment Plan (MAP)

Two new task forces are being formed and there are openings to serve on either. One task force will be making recommendations on ways to increase funding for the Presbytery and the other will be examining Presbytery restricted funds and expenditure limits and making recommendations on possible consolidations and/or changes in the limits.

A job description and shortened title for a new, full-time Presbytery Leader was approved.

The Presbytery, like most of our congregations, is faced with a dwindling list of volunteers to serve on Presbytery committees. It was approved to reduce the numbers required for many of the committees and also that our operating manual be updated to reflect the change.

Rental income from Yucaipa Valley Church has been approved to fund six months of ministry at El Buen Pastor. The amount approved is \$50,000. Some good work is being done by El Buen Pastor in their area of San Bernardino, possibly the most notable being the building of neighborhood relationships built and the offering of showers for the unhoused—hopefully through the use of mobile facilities on-loan from Abundant Living Family Church in Rancho Cucamonga.

Our Presbytery approved the recommended per capita increase from \$36.00 to \$40.00. The discussion noted that, given the current rate of inflation, this is a fairly modest increase and still will not begin to cover the deficit. It was also noted that the approved amount is among the lowest rates across the country and in Presbyteries with similar population numbers.

GA Report

It was noted that the GA voted to expand the Matthew 25 initiative to include the following functions:

Center for the Repair of Historical Harms and The Office of Innovation, Futuring, and Discernment.

"Those connect to PMA's strategy to assure that concerns around confronting racism, environment concerns, standing against violence and militarism, and advocating for the dispossessed come before the Assembly on a regular basis. We seek permission-giving new ideas. We notice that as we engage the core values of Matthew 25, we face new areas of intersection." (from the PC(USA) GA website).

A description of the
Matthew 25 invitation
from the PC(USA)The themes of the Matthew 25 invitation are grounded in the gospel.Jesus calls us to serve with and for "the least of these" — not as a group to
be pitied, but as people who are deeply loved by Jesus.

We aim to help multiply this loving commitment to radical and fearless discipleship by partnering with mid councils and congregations to help them embrace one or more of these three focuses:

• Building congregational vitality... • Dismantling structural racism... • Eradicating systemic poverty...

Our presbytery has declared ourselves a Matthew 25 Presbytery. Find out more about what that means at https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/matt-25-resources/ (and/or read Matthew 25:31-46)

First Presbyterian Church October 2022							
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
25 10:30am Worship Service	26	27 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	28 9:00am Staff Meeting 5:30pm SESSION	29	30 9:30am Kerygma	1 8:30am SJO rehearsal 10:00am Straight Up AA	
2 World Communion Sunday 10:30am Worship Service	3 6:00pm PW Thank Offering Gathering	4 7:00pm Circle of Faith 7:00pm Mensch Group	5 4:00pm Worship Committee	6	7 9:30am Kerygma	8 8:30am Intern applicant Interviews 8:30am SJO rehearsal 10:00am Straight Up AA	
9 10:30am Worship Service	10	11 6:30pm Deacons	12	13 4:30pm Nurture Committee	14 B:30am Food Bagging 9:30am Kerygma	15 Deadline for First Press articles 8:30am SJ:0 rehearsal 9:00am Deacon Food Distribution 10:30am Straight Up AA 1:00pm Nurturing Seeds of Change Retreat	
16 10:30am Worship Service	17	18 1:00pm Circle of Grace and Hope 7:00pm Mensch Group	19 5:30pm Stewardship Committee	20 9:00am Friendship Circle 5:30pm Buildings & Grounds Committee	21 9:30am Kerygma	22 8:30am SJO rehearsal 10:00am Straight Up AA	
23 10:30am Worship Service	24	25 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	26 5:30pm SESSION	27	28 9:30am Kerygma	29 8:30am SJO rehearsal 10:00am Straight Up AA	
30 Thermation Jonday Reformation Sunday 10:30am Worship Service	31	1 All Saints Day 1:00pm RPEA Board 7:00pm Circle of Faith 7:00pm Mensch Group	2 4:30pm Worship Committee	3	4 9:30am Kerygma	5 8:30am SJO rehearsal 10:00am Straight Up AA	

First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

1900 North D Street San Bernardino, CA 92405

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 2729 San Bernardino, CA 92406

Office: 882-3308 email: pres.first@gmail.com www.fpcsb.net

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 9 am to 4:30 pm The Rev. Dr. Sandy Tice Pastor

Dr. Wendy Long Lamb Commissioned Local Pastor

The Rev. Dr. Steve Smith Pastoral Support

> Laurie Stafford Ministry of Visitation

The Rev. Jim Huffstutler Pastor Emeritus

It is the Mission of First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through worship and celebration, and teaching and learning, so that lives are transformed and members are encouraged to use their special gifts to care for and value, as God's Beloved, each other and the community in which we live.