



First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

First Press

February 2023



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We live in a culture bent on definitions of a good life as continuous upward mobility— climbing ladders of prosperity with increasingly fabulous experiences that we can post to ever- more-likable social media accounts. We may comb the shelves of the self-help section in search of just the right formula to gain success. Perhaps we even gravitate towards spiritual leaders who promise great rewards if we only do “the right thing.” But life happens, right? Most times we are not moving upward but trying to repair the rung we’ve just slipped from. So what if we stopped climbing and started fertilizing, watering, and blooming right where we find ourselves? Welcome to a Lent of affirming a faith in which we are blessed, regardless, and where we can lean into embracing our “good enough” lives.

Join us at First Pres San Bernardino in person or online for a
"Good Enough" Lent.

Ash Wednesday: February 22

Sunday Worship: February 26, March 5, 12, 19, 26

Palm Sunday: April 2

Maundy Thursday: April 6

Easter Sunday: April 9

Pastor's Page

You may remember that for a few years Rev. David Nagler was the director of Central City Lutheran Mission here in San Bernardino. He is the one who introduced us to Marilyn Kraft, he has traveled with many of us to Companions, and once was a speaker for our Lenten Retreat. David was elected last May as Bishop of the Pacifica Synod of the ELCA (his denomination). He wrote the following article and our officers used it as a springboard for discussion at their retreat this month. We reprint it here with his kind permission.



The Gift of the Ec-centric Church

Since the conversion of Constantine in 317 a.d. to the middle of the 20th century, the Christian church had been in the center of Western society. European history lurches from the horrible Doctrine of Discovery in 1492, to the colonization of the globe for economic and political gain, to the policy of Manifest Destiny in North America. The unchallenged assumption was that it was a virtue to make the whole world submit to the center of power, which was the Christian church. Christian supremacy was heralded as the end point of human history. Even the magazine, "The Christian Century" was so named because at the beginning of the 1900's the prediction was that the whole world would become Christian by the year 2000.

There have been voices from the edges as well. The desert fathers and mothers recognized the danger of coupling empire with the Jesus movement so they established monastic communities in the wilderness to safeguard the core teachings and practices of the faith. Later Christians would follow in their footsteps bearing witness to the power of love over the love of power.

In China during the Maoist revolution the church leaders were jailed, and the church flourished. In Germany during the Holocaust dissenters from the state church signed the Barman declaration and formed the confessing church that opposed the policies of the Third Reich. In Central America, base Christian communities rejected the complicity of the official church with governments that oppressed their people, and the liberation movement was born. In the United States during the centuries of chattel slavery believers in Jesus put their lives on the line as abolitionists and allies who created the underground railroad liberating enslaved people.

A 30,000 foot view of church history is revealing. When we were in power (politically and militarily) we caused incredible damage and betrayed the mission of Jesus of Nazareth. When we were pushed to the edges or forced to face a great injustice, we found our voice and purpose. We remembered that our mandate is love and not force.

You might object to this simplistic view of history. You would be right to point out that many important institutions that have benefitted humanity have been established during the periods of history when the church was at the center of society. However, I would argue that no institution, no matter how beneficial, is a counterweight to slavery, genocide, misogyny, cultural oppression, land appropriation, racism, and dehumanization of people with non-binary gender identities or non-heterosexual relationships.

Why does this matter now? On Christmas Day the New York Times published an article by Ross Douthat ("The Americanization of Religion", NYT, 12/25/22) that examined the state of the church in America today. He cited a Pew Research Center model that presented four potential options for the future of the church in the coming decades. Basically, they are all models for decline. If nothing changes these trendlines project a bleak picture of our future together.

What if the Holy Spirit is missing from these projections? What if the people of God do our best work from the edges not the center of society? What if God is calling us currently to be the church in a vulnerable new way? This church will look a lot more like the early church or the first disciples. We would be deepening our spiritual practices, joining in God's work to bring justice and healing to our communities, and finding our groove again! Isn't that so much better than chasing the trappings of a bygone era? It is time to exchange our basilicas for backpacks. It is a season for unleashing the power of love and letting go of our need to "go back to how things were before". The truth is that the good old days were not so good for so many of God's children.

The word "eccentric" literally means "not in the center". We have often used this word to say that a person or group is odd or strange. Eccentric people don't fit the mold. They dance to the beat of a different drum.

The world yearns for an eccentric church; a place for misfits, non-conformists, weirdos...you know, people like us! It cries out for a community that rejects the earth destroying practices of the center; one that **continued on next page**

continued from last page refuses to measure worth by a bank account statement or the title that a person holds. The Spirit is calling for a church that embraces those who have been rejected, dehumanized, or discounted. This community does not need to be right with all the perfect answers but is doggedly committed to relationships. It cancels nobody but learns and practices the hard work of true reconciliation. It is diverse, artistic, lean, agile, focused, and above all, loving.

To become this kind of church will require a depth of spirituality that we have previously not known. It is never easy to move from the center to the edges when all the things that we have been taught to value are in the center. All the shiny trinkets and promises of security are there. We will need to become more intimately connected to God and more deeply committed to each other. We will definitely need more parties and fewer meetings! No more wringing our hands over a misremembered past. Let's move on to the dancing and celebrating the gift of life and love!

This is my prayer for us dear synod. I feel this call in the core of my being. Do you feel it too? Do you want to be part of such a movement, a church that looks and feels like the dynamic community of the book of Acts?

I believe that all (and I mean all) that we have experienced in our congregations over the past 30-40 years is leading us to a new beginning. The Spirit has been active in ways that feel like losing but ultimately are pruning us for a revival. Let us recommit ourselves to following Jesus and his joyful mission of feeding the hungry, releasing the captives, healing the sick and casting out the demonic spirits of our times. Let's embrace our eccentricity! We can only do this work on the edges of society. May it be so!

Peace and All Good,

Bishop Dave

150th Anniversary Photos

Have you heard? 2024 will mark our church's anniversary! First organizing gatherings (as near as we can tell) were early in 1874, and we had written and approved final bylaws by November of that year.

We are going to have a party: a festive day of worship, food, family, and fun! Here is how you can help:

- Put it on your own calendar! It will be Sunday, New Year's Eve 2023. Details will follow, but it will include worship, lunch and fun- done by mid-afternoon.
- Reach out to one person you have not seen in a long time and tell them this is in the works! Ask them to mark their calendar, and perhaps make travel plans for a reunion and celebration full of play and memories and music and beauty and community!
- Contribute a photo, the older the better! Have you any photos taken on a festival day, or at a baptism? Photos of a children's pageant, Habitat work, church school or a PW celebration? What about photos of people at a talent show or a choir making music or a picnic or BBQ? Our common life is rich and full- and many of you have EVIDENCE! We've engaged a volunteer to sort and organize photos, and a videographer to stitch them into a presentation for the Big Day- but we need your photos!
- Instructions for contributing photos: if contributing a physical/ paper photo, write your name on the back if you want it returned. There is a basket in the office reception area for these. If you wish, you can scan your physical photo and send us the digital scan, so the photo never leaves your house. If you have digital photos (previously scanned or taken with a digital camera) you can attach them to an email and send them with "150 photo" in the subject line to secretary Laurie Stafford- fpcsnb@gmail.com Whether paper or digital, give us caption information: what are we looking at? Who is in the photo? About when was it taken?



Sandy and Wendy visit Eliecer Borrantes & wife Abby, their son Isaac, daughter Mari, and new baby Mateo.

Please share copies of photos from any time in our First Pres life with Christa Wallis who is assembling a presentation for our 150th celebration in Jan 2024. Hand them off to Christa in person, send them by email, or put them in the designated box at the reception desk. What fun we'll have!



2016 Walk for Life



2015 Interns





Notes

Leonard Scholarship Applications. Leonard Scholarship applications for fall 2023-2024 are available in the church office and on the church website. All applications must be in the church office no later than 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 28th, 2023. Any questions can be emailed to Lynda K. Savage at Lksavage3@gmail.com.

When did You get here!?!

In an interview with Nancy Sellas for our newsletter, Margaret Doane discovered that the Sellas/Gustafson family has been part of First Pres for 100 years!! Wow! This got us to wondering if there are any others you know whose connections to this congregation go back generations! Reach out to Pastor Sandy or Laurie Stafford if you have a story to tell about your long association with this First Pres! It will be especially fun to consider this as we prepare for our 150th anniversary celebration.



Choir!

Come and Sing!

Beginning this week, Thursday, February 2, choir will meet in Fireside Lounge to rehearse from 6:30-8:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month. We will continue to meet weekly on Sunday mornings from 8:45-9:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

If you love to sing, come and join the choir!

Financial Notes

Financial Report as of December 31, 2022.

General Fund

	Actual	Budgeted	Over/(Under)
Pledges	\$421,592.12	400,836.00	21,206.12
Other Income*	\$114,559.61	66,809.00	47,750.61
Expense	\$519,378.43	536,854.23	(17,475.80)
Net Income	\$16,773.30	(69,659.23)	86,432.53

*Other Income includes 26,1827.92 from sale of office building at 1875 N D.

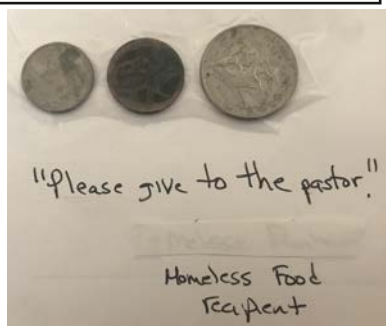
Division Consolidation

	December	Year to date
General Fund Net Income (Expense)	17,591.70	16,773.30
Deacons Net Income (Expense)	1,074.83	(4,561.46)
NET OPERATING INCOME (EXPENSE)	18,666.53	12,211.84

Annual Congregational Meeting

After worship on Sunday, February 5, we will hold our annual meeting of the congregation to review the year and elect nominating committee members.

Be sure to read the annual report you received via email last Friday or on paper Sunday in preparation for the meeting and our conversation.



A food recipient gives back

Scrip Sales Return!

Linda McCarl is currently organizing and heading up Stater Brothers' Scrip Sales during our fellowship hour after worship. She will not necessarily set up a table each week, but she will have scrip and will be happy to sell it to you. As we work out a schedule, Youth will be joining her to help with the fundraising.

When you buy scrip, you can use it, dollar for dollar at Stater Brothers. Meanwhile, the youth mission and activities fund receives 5% of the dollar amount. If you buy a \$100 scrip card, you have \$100 to spend at Staters and the youth receive \$5.

The youth use the scrip funds for mission experiences like Tapestry's Middle School Mission Week and for retreats, camps, and other activities such as Rock Climbing (local) or Triennium (national).

We are grateful to Linda for taking on this ministry formerly organized by Rena Nolin whom we miss every day.

--Wendy for the Nurture Committee

The Dodds Spirituality Trust

This is the fifth article in a series of articles on endowment funds at the Church. These designated funds help pay for specific programs. A big thank you goes to Nancy Sellas, who was a longtime member of this church, who provided all of the information for this article. -- Margaret Doane, Stewardship Chair

Helen and Stewart Dodds did something extraordinary with their estate: they gave very generous bequests to Helen's and Stewart's childhood churches -- even though neither had attended either for decades. Helen's remarkable gift is a testament to her love for her family and the church so dear to her parents, sister, and niece.

The Gustafson family's involvement with First Pres began in the early years of the twentieth century and continued for four generations and for a hundred years. Minnie and Ernest Gustafson were active and devoted members and raised their four children -- Ruth, Norman, Helen, and Frances -- in the church. Helen met Stewart Dodds when they both attended UC Berkeley, and the couple and son Ken always lived in the Bay Area, attending First Pres only when visiting family in the area. Ken was killed in a race car accident. Helen and Stewart willed their estate to various charities, a large portion going to Helen's home church and to Stewart's home church in Beaumont.

Helen and Frances were always close. Frances married Neal Batchelor, and they were active in the church, as were their children, Nancy and Steve. And the deep ties with First Pres continued yet another generation when Nancy and husband Reggie Sellas raised their children Katie and Peter in the church. Nancy was a vital and active member for more than sixty years. She and her husband moved to Laguna Beach only after their home was destroyed in the 2003 fire that burned hundreds of homes in San Bernardino. (The accompanying picture of Minnie and Ernest Gustafson and Helen (L) and Frances (R) is one of only a few that still exists of the sisters together since all of Nancy's photos were lost in the fire.)

While the Dodds bequeathed the money to our church, the idea of how her aunt's money would be used was Nancy's. The Dodds Spirituality Trust was funded in 1999, and for the last 23 years has allowed members of this church to deepen their spirituality primarily through attending the week-long Companions on the Inner Way retreat in Malibu. Nancy has urged the church to be "generous in giving out the money," and between seven and fifteen scholarships have been funded each year. We have been so deeply enriched by Nancy's guidance, and by Helen's gift to honor the church and the people she loved.



February Birthdays and Anniversaries

Feb 2	Brian & Amy Gano	Feb 14	Eva Diane Olsen
Feb 6	Kiera Everly French	Feb 15	Randy Mantei
Feb 7	Stephanie Fletcher		Joanna Nord
	Clara Gresham	Feb 16	Kendra Lamb
	Frank Thomas		Doris Schiavone
Feb 8	Hannah Huffstutler Bodner	Feb 19	Kevin Law
	Roy Nix		Amy Smith
Feb 11	Carol Cooper	Feb 22	Janet McKinster
	Tim Garcia	Feb 23	Martha Pinckney
Feb 12	Sue Alexander	Feb 26	Christa Wallis
Feb 13	Nita Zwolinski		

Community Action Partnership Day Pictures

The First Presbyterian Church January 2023 Food Distribution was Saturday, January 21st, but before we can have the Food Distribution on Saturday, we have to go to Community Action Partnership (CAP) on Friday to pick up food. Following are some pictures of the work done on Friday, January 20th to get things ready for our Food Distribution.

- Picking up the food at CAP
- Unloading the pallets of food when we got back to First Pres
- Isabel and Steve taking a pallet into Fellowship Hall
- Mark bagging the food
- Neal bagging the food
- Steve keeping the tubs of food full
- Almost done with the 192 bags of CAP food we have to make

The 192 bags of Feeding America food were made earlier in the week. Then all of the food was passed out in 2 hours on Saturday, January 21st. Thank you to all of the many people who helped pick up food, bag the food and helped on Food Distribution day. It was a success because of all of you.



An Announcement

(Shared in worship on Sunday) A letter was mailed last week sharing the news that Pastor Sandy will retire this summer. If you did not receive the letter, you can find it on our website, FPCSB.net. Because we are Presbyterian and we strive to do things decently and in order, your Session, the decision-making body, was told Wednesday evening and the letter went out Thursday morning. Session was, as you imagine, stunned and sad, but also glad for Sandy and Tom and grateful for what this congregation has done together with Sandy over the past 17 years. Nothing will happen immediately, but your Session, Pastor Steve and I (Wendy), and our presbytery will be working toward the best possible transition.



Board of Deacons 2023

Rebecca Allen, Moderator; Steve Smith, Pastoral Support

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

Class of 2025: Brad Smith, Dave Thomas

December Session Highlights

by Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

Session met on December 21st via Zoom due to the increased COVID concerns. Something that was foreign three years ago now enables us to connect when we cannot be in person and has become a blessing in disguise! We were delighted to hear the Oak Tree D Street Learning Center will open on January 17th! We approved continuing the grant to Nancy Wiens for her work with indigenous people which is funded outside but administered through our church. We regretfully removed members from our rolls who have not been involved in our church life for several years. Increased security will be placed on some of our classroom doors due to a recent break in that showed a security weakness and Buildings and Grounds will be working to secure all vulnerable places on our campus. We still hope for additional pledges to add to the many missions of our church. Our Food Ministry continues to deliver – serving 290 households on Tuesday and Thursdays and 212 households on the Saturday distribution.

Our Water Team reported that on Thursday, November 17, 2022, representatives of the San Bernardino and Claremont Presbyterian Church Clean Water Teams traveled to the Colegio Didaqué Elementary School on the campus of Iglesia Monte Horab in Tijuana, Mexico. The purpose of the visit was to attend a final water education program for the students, and to participate in the inauguration of the newly constructed and fully operational clean water facility fitted with its clean water ozone/filtration system, installed by the FPCSB and CPC Clean Water teams. The Inauguration Ceremony represented the culmination of five years of effort by the respective water teams.

Oak Tree D Street Now Open!

by Sandy Tice

After a year of preparation, planning, and waiting on permits/inspections/ and licensing requirements, Oak Tree is now open! Beginning with just a couple of infants, the school is ready to hire staff and enroll new families. Our onsite director is Melissa, and teachers Miracle and Stella are ready to get things moving.

On Sunday 1/15, they had an open house and invited us in to see the beautifully refurbished rooms. Owner Jennifer Carter and her husband Leighton were on hand to greet and welcome and answer questions. Zach Garcia, who was in town, said he was a graduate- but would love to enroll again since the place looks so great! Joanne Ballard, Curtiss Allen, Jeanne Clark, and others spoke fondly of dropping kids off and picking them up again, and of what the ministry of Early Childhood Ed can mean to kids and families.

We are grateful to have this new venture available to our neighborhood, grateful to have these rooms once again in use, grateful to welcome new partners into the work of educating children so that they can flourish.

Keep Military Members in Your Prayers

Sgt. Jacob Allen,

US Marines, MFR Band, New Orleans, Louisiana

LCpl Jeremy Allen,

US Marines, Okinawa, Japan

FPC Ethan Gano,

US Marines, Pensacola, Florida

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 2023

Sandy Tice, Moderator; Wendy Lamb, CLP; Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

Class of 2023: Jeanne Clarke, Susan Skoglund, Alex Smith, Tim Usher

Class of 2024: Mary Bolaños, Brooke Dvorak, Patrick Morris, Martha Pinckney

Class of 2025: Lily Bolaños, Margaret Doane, Jonathan Horstmann, Phyllis Hough

First Presbyterian Church

February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	30	31	1 4:30pm Worship Committee	2	3 9:30am Kerygma	4 8:30am SJO rehearsal 10:00am Straight Up AA
5 Communion Sunday 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Annual Meeting	6	7 1:00pm RPEA Board 7:00pm Circle of Faith 7:00pm Mensch Group	8 4:30pm Nurture Committee	9	10 9:30am Kerygma	11 8:30am SJO rehearsal 10:00am Straight Up AA
12 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am PW Super Bowl Bake Sale	13	14 Valentine's Day 6:30pm Deacons	15 Deadline for First Press articles 5:30pm Stewardship Committee	16 9:00am Friendship Circle 5:30pm Buildings & Grounds Committee	17 9:00am Food Bagging 9:30am Kerygma	18 9:00am Deacon Food Distribution 10:00am Straight Up AA 1:00pm SJO rehearsal
19 Transfiguration Sunday 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	20 Church Office Closed. Presidents' Day	21 1:00pm Circle of Grace and Hope 7:00pm Mensch Group 5:30 pm Session	22  ASH WEDNESDAY Ash Wednesday	23	24 9:30am Kerygma	25 8:30am SJO rehearsal 10:00am Straight Up AA
26  9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	27 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	28	1 4:30pm Worship Committee	2	3 9:30am Kerygma	4 8:30am SJO rehearsal 10:00am Straight Up AA

First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

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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.