



First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

First Press

April 2024

Christ is risen!



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A Bird from the Lord, an invitation.

This Eastertide we will be considering the birds. We will be looking at birds in scripture and pondering what they mean to us and how they give us a glimpse of God. I invite you to watch for a Bird from the Lord. Throughout Eastertide, spend ten minutes outside sitting and watching--every day or week or once in a while. Watch for what God brings you, watch for a Bird from the Lord.

This is my plan, but as I always say on the syllabus, I reserve the right to change the schedule:

April 7: Pigeons/Doves

April 14: Corvids

April 21: Quails

April 28: Sparrows

May 5: Vultures

May 12: Youth Sunday

May 19: Pentecost

May 26: Trinity Sunday--Eagle, Hen, Wild Goose

Mission Assessment Plan and Next Steps Forward

by Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

As you all are aware, a Mission Assessment Team (MAT) of seven members have met diligently over the past 6 months to prepare a Mission Action Plan (MAP), which is required before we search for a new pastor. The MAP was sent to the Presbytery Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations Commission for approval. The feedback we received was amazing! Everyone was so impressed with the depth, overall coverage, and ability to paint a picture of this congregation – who we are, where we are, and what we want to be. You will all be given an opportunity to read the MAP (it is a huge file to email to everyone so we will find an alternative method of dissemination). It highlights our hopes and concerns, which are important for anyone interested in serving on the committee to understand.

With Presbytery's approval, we are allowed to form a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). Being a member of a PNC entails a good amount of work: regular meetings (once a week ideally), posting the required paperwork with church information for those seeking a call, reviewing resumes, determining which warrant further interaction, interviewing, listening to sermons, perhaps visiting a worship service, etc. Session appointed a small group who will gather names for the potential PNC – Wendy Lamb, Amy Smith, Kathy Showman and Pat Morris. If this sounds like something you'd be interested in exploring, please let one of these people know. Expressing your interest is not a guarantee you will serve as the group needs to give careful consideration to all interested, keeping in mind the need to balance members (ages, stages, interests, genders). The potential committee members will have to be approved at a Congregational Meeting. This is exciting news as we move forward in the life of our church!

This Congregation is Amazing!

by Amy Smith

This morning (March 29th) I was contemplating the upcoming weather forecast and how it would impact our Easter preparations. As we typically prepare all the flower arrangements on the patio outside Fireside Lounge (and make quite a mess!), I wondered what might be an alternative. As Symphonie Jeunesse rehearses in Fellowship Hall, that wasn't an option. After putting out a few texts to various people connected to the church, I learned that Captain Dave had already placed tarps in Fireside Lounge so we could prepare our garden there and have an easy clean up! It made me so proud that so many care about this church and our customs!



Congregation members and interns in the Fireside Lounge arranging flowers for Easter

Keep Military Members in Your Prayers

Sgt Jacob Allen,

US Marines, MFR Band, New Orleans, Louisiana

Cpl Jeremy Allen,

US Marines, Okinawa, Japan

Lt. Alejandro J. Balandran,

US Navy, Yokosuka, Japan

PFC Ethan Gano,

US Marines, Pensacola, Florida

Seaman Mark Munz,

US Navy, San Diego, California

Lt. Junior Grade Wade Phillip Preciado,

US Navy, Groton, Connecticut

Petty Officer First Class 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



Notes

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 May newsletter is Saturday, April 20.

Financial Notes

Financial Report as of February 29, 2023.

General Fund

	Actual	Budgeted	Over/(Under)
Pledges	\$39,700.23	56,536.40	(19,836.17)
Other Income*	\$18,693.17	30,067.10	(11,373.93)
Expense	\$88,234.66	99,264.56	(11,029.90)
Net Income	\$(17,324.33)	(9,661.06)	(7,663.27)

Division Consolidation

	February	Year to date
General Fund Net Income (Expense)	(6,006.00)	(17,324.33)
Deacons Net Income (Expense)	(2,081.34)	1,767.43
Net Operating Income (Expense)	(8,087.34)	(15,556.90)

April Birthdays and Anniversaries

Apr 1	Wayne McCarl Ray & Becky Nelligan Irene Sandoval- Suverkrup
Apr 3	John-Paul Fletcher
Apr 4	Howard Le Roy
Apr 5	Laura Olsen Dunn Jacob Allen
Apr 7	Patricia Parks
Apr 8	Mary Bolaños Don & Earleen Dudley
Apr 12	Frederick Star
Apr 13	Cassidy Wright
Apr 15	Kelsey Adelson Jennifer Mantei
Apr 16	Marilyn Karnig Beverly Snell
Apr 18	Michelle Lea Babcock Don Dudley Oliver Andrew Lamb
Apr 20	Cliff Cummings Joseph Ramirez
Apr 24	Harlan Leonard Wright
Apr 27	Jonah Roy Morales
Apr 28	Jim Cimino Jim Coyne Mark Freeman
Apr 29	Jim & Helen Babcock

Graduates!

If you are a graduate or have a family member graduating from high school, college, or graduate school this spring, please send her/his name, relationship to congregation members, school and degree (if appropriate), and graduation date to Newsletter@fpcsb.net by Wednesday, April 24, for recognition in the May newsletter.

If you can **include a photo** of the graduate, that would be terrific. You can email or text it to me, Wendy.

If you would like to include a note about "what's next" for the graduate, I will also include that information.

In Memoriam

March 2024

Roy Nix

February 8, 1930-March 18, 2024

"In life and in death we belong to God."

4 photos clockwise from top left: Lily trimming, Vincent mowing Magnolia Court lawn, Lizzet & Yadi bagging celery for Tuesday food giveaway, Ana & Maria helping with Easter flowers for Sanctuary.

Our Winter/Spring 2024 Intern Team

by Rick Rodriguez, Intern Supervisor

We have a very talented team of interns who have been working together since February 17th. They have been involved in many jobs around our church campus that go unnoticed and have worked with other members of our church family on projects that we all needed to get done especially on the Saturdays before Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Following are a few pictures showing some of the work and personalities of this 23rd term of interns which will end on April 20th.



Front Row L to R: Marlene (Supervisor), Maria, Lizzet
Back Row: Vincent, Lily, Rick (Supervisor), Ana (Missing: Oscar)



Youth Group for Youth Sunday

May 12, the Seventh Sunday in Easter (also Mothers' Day), our youth will lead us in a joyful worship service.

The youth will begin preparing on April 7, after worship, in Room 11. We will have lunch and spend time reading scripture, choosing a theme, planning the order of worship, and selecting music. *Students, if you wish to make decisions about scripture, liturgy, and music, please be at this meeting.*

Youth group will continue to meet in April and early May to plan and write and rehearse as they worshipfully prepare to lead with joy.

Board of Deacons 2024

Katie Smith, Moderator; Steve Smith, Pastoral Support

Class of 2024: Dan Direen, Robin Edwards, Richard Rodriguez, Katie Smith

Class of 2025: Rebecca Allen, Brad Smith, Dave Thomas, Chris Wright-Thomas

Class of 2026: Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda

Our Extraordinary Volunteers: Dave Thomas

by Margaret Doane and Dave Thomas

Articles for the rest of 2024 will feature individuals and groups whose service to the Church is extraordinary; this is the first in this series.

If each member were to write down the names of people who devote many hours a week to the Church, Dave Thomas's name would be on every list. Dave is at the Church for several days a week most weeks and is involved in many aspects of Church life: he is active in the Food program, safety and security, and buildings and grounds maintenance.

Dave was born in Plainfield, New Jersey on October 2, 1960 and had an experience that would define his life when he was five: an open house at a fire station! Dave's interest in all aspects of the fire service continued throughout his childhood and adolescence in Claremont (the family had moved when he was six); and, after graduating from Claremont High School in 1978, he completed EMT and paramedic training. He married Cheryl in 1987: they had two daughters, Shannon, now an RN at Redlands Community Hospital; and Karen, now a tattoo artist who works at a tattoo supply company.

Dave's career with the Fire Department -- quite an illustrious one -- spanned thirty years. In 1986 he was hired by Cal Fire in San Bernardino and was assigned to the Highland Fire Station, where he was a Paramedic Fire Fighter. He was promoted to Engineer and drove the fire engine; and later became a Captain, in charge of the engine crew. He trained fire fighters, worked in dispatch and supervised inmate crews. He got to fly in helicopters and even drove a bulldozer a few times. He was a Captain for over twenty years.

Dave has been a member of First Pres for 25 years. He met Chris here in 2015; since their marriage, their blended family has included, in addition to Shannon and Karen, Chris's son Cassidy and his wife Ilona, as well as grandchildren Harlan, Sanai, and Waverly. Dave's dad, Frank, lives nearby at The Villas and attends First Pres and works in the Food program; and dog O'Malley and cat Caspè complete the household. Dave and Chris enjoy going to movies and exploring unique places in California.

Dave's extreme volunteerism began when Sandy approached him at Family Camp and asked him to be on the Safety Committee. He became Chair after six months and organized active shooter training and safety teams; and he has coordinated new cameras, lights, doors, and locks (much of this through a \$100,000 Homeland Security Grant). He painted the old Childcare Center to get it ready for our new tenants; and, with James, does much of the grounds maintenance. Dave "loves working with James," and calls our staff -- James, Laurie, and Mimi -- the "unsung heroes" of our Church. Sandy recognized Dave's contributions one Sunday by surprising him with a jacket from Session with "Captain Dave" embroidered on it. After Sandy's retirement James surprised Dave by giving him Sandy's old parking spot at church. James painted "Cap'n Dave" on the parking spot curb which started his nickname at Church. Dave is very flattered with all the recognition but prefers being humble with his volunteering, saying he's just "one of many wonderful volunteers at our Church."

Dave says he likes working at the Church because "the people in our congregation are so nice," and he has "made a lot of friends." And he likes it that "you get to do pretty much whatever you're interested in." It would be difficult to imagine the Church running as smoothly without the contributions of Cap'n Dave.



A Place of Healing... in... An Epidemic of Loneliness by Marilyn Kraft

In its evaluation, the Mission Assessment Team was asked to consider “Who is hurting?” We found in a 2023 Surgeon General Advisory, “Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation” that an increasing number of people of all ages are suffering from loneliness and isolation.

The report cites a decline in religious participation as one of many causes of isolation and states that “*Religious or faith-based groups can be a source for regular social contact, serve as a community of support, provide meaning and purpose, create a sense of belonging around shared values and beliefs.*”

We strive to be a community of belonging and empathy, but what are the impacts of loneliness?

“Loneliness is far more than just a bad feeling—it harms both individual and societal health. It is associated with a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, stroke, depression, anxiety, and premature death. The mortality impact of being socially disconnected is similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, and even greater than that associated with obesity and physical inactivity.”

Lacking social connection is as dangerous as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.

What do we mean by belonging and empathy? How do loneliness and isolation differ from solitude? How do these definitions from the advisory deepen our understanding of the need?

Belonging: A fundamental human need—the feeling of deep connection with social groups, physical places, and individual and collective experiences.

Empathy: The capability to understand and feel the emotional states of others, resulting in compassionate behavior.

Loneliness: A subjective distressing experience that results from perceived isolation or inadequate meaningful connections, where inadequate refers to the discrepancy or unmet need between an individual’s preferred and actual experience.

Social Isolation: Objectively having few social relationships, social roles, group memberships, and infrequent social interaction.

Solitude: A state of aloneness by choice that does not involve feeling lonely.

What can each of us do?

“Each of us can start now, in our own lives, by strengthening our connections and relationships. Our individual relationships are an untapped resource—a source of healing hiding in plain sight. They can help us live healthier, more productive, and more fulfilled lives. Answer that phone call from a friend. Make time to share a meal. Listen without the distraction of your phone. Perform an act of service. Express yourself authentically. The keys to human connection are simple, but extraordinarily powerful.”

Be a part of the healing this week. With whom will you connect? What actions will you take?

US Department of Health and Human Services (2023). Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation, The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community, available at <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>.

Commissioned Pastor's Corner

I have laughed a bit with people about the “decent and in order” and slow way the Presbyterian call process works. Folks keep asking if we have a new pastor yet (or at least a candidate). But that’s not how it works. We form committees to form committees because we are Presbyterians. The first step is complete. The work of the Mission Assessment Team allows us to take stock of who we are now, and where God is leading us now. It helps us understand ourselves and our needs and how we’ve changed since we last called a pastor. It is a great foundation for us as we look for who God is calling to join us in the work.



I was blown away by the document and what it says about who we are as a congregation. Look for an email in the next couple of days showing you how to access the plan. I hope you will take the opportunity to read through it. It describes the extensive ministry that we undertake. It shows how this congregation, so much smaller than it was in the past, continues to minister both within the congregation and outside the congregation, in the community and the world. It shows our creativity and ways we have found to continue ministries differently or to begin new things we never could have imagined. It is a document filled with grace and hope.

Now comes the next step. Pray for strength, humility, thoughtfulness, and grace as we form the team (voted on by the congregation) who will look and listen for whom God is calling.

--Peace, Wendy

February and March Session Highlights

by Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

Your Session has met twice since the last newsletter and have lots to share. In February we welcomed the Mission Assessment Team (MAT) to our meeting to share the process they used to complete the Mission Assessment Plan (MAP), the first step before we are able to search for a new pastor. They explained their methodology and answered questions. Special recognition was given to Marilyn Kraft, whom Chair Jim Morris stated “was a lynchpin driver in developing and synthesizing both data, ideas and content for the MAP. Without Marilyn, the depth and integrity of the final MAP would not have been achievable.” Several Session members had read the MAP and were very impressed and we agreed to send it to Presbytery for approval while we all had time to digest the contents.

We also heard about two Presbytery Assembly meetings that were held – one to receive and approve terms of call for Brian Gaeta-Symonds to serve at All Peoples Church in Cathedral City. The second included several items of interest, including endorsement of an overture to General Assembly to find a way to continue creating educational curriculum in English and the difficult decision to not continue to fund the ministry of El Buen Pastor Church in San Bernardino.

Our March meeting was brief but opened with good news – Presbytery approved our MAP and we can move forward in the pastor search process! Please see the related article about our next steps.

We shared our impressions about the MAP and approved funds to replace the heat pump in the Chapel. This, along with a great deal of work done by Norm Wallis, is one of the first steps to refurbishing the Chapel for continued use.

Session 2024

Stephen W. Smith, Moderator; Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

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

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

Class of 2026: Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clarke, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis



Symphonie Jeunesse

Symphonie Jeunesse
Youth Orchestra for Strings
Conducted by Founder/Artistic Director
Michèle Tacchia

Music in Myth and Fantasy
Saturday, April 20, 2024
3:00 p.m.

Concert will be at First Presbyterian Church in Fellowship Hall
1900 North D Street, San Bernardino, CA 92405. Admission is Free.
Symphoniejeunesse.org Email: sjostrings.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31  Easter Sunday 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	1 5:00pm PW Coordinating Team	2 12:00pm Circle of Faith 7:00pm Mensch Group	3 4:30pm Worship Committee	4 5:15pm Yoga Class	5 9:30am Kerygma	6 8:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
7 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	8	9 6:30pm Deacons	10 12:30pm Staff Meeting	11 5:15pm Yoga Class 6:30pm Sanctuary Choir	12 9:30am Kerygma	13 8:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
14 Companions on the Inner Way 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Youth Sunday Preparation	15 Companions on the Inner Way	16 Companions on the Inner Way 1:00pm Circle of Grace and Hope 7:00pm Mensch Group	17 Companions on the Inner Way 5:00pm Stewardship Committee	18 Companions on the Inner Way 9:00am Friendship Circle 5:15pm Yoga Class	19 Companions on the Inner Way 9:00am Food Bagging 9:30am Kerygma	20 Deadline for First Press articles 9:00am Deacon Food Distribution 10:00am Straight Up AA 1:00pm Symphonie Jeunesse 3:00pm Symphonie Jeunesse concert
21 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Youth Sunday Preparation	22 5:30pm Buildings & Grounds Committee 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	23	24 12:30pm Staff Meeting 5:15pm SESSION Dinner 6:00pm SESSION Meeting	25 5:15pm Yoga Class	26 9:30am Kerygma	27 8:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
28 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Youth Sunday Preparation	29	30	1 4:30pm Worship Committee	2 5:15pm Yoga Class	3 9:30am Kerygma	4 10:00am Straight Up AA

Please check the calendar on the website for the most up-to-date information. https://fpcsb.net/events_links/calendar

First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

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Monday-Friday
 9 am to 4:30 pm

Dr. Wendy Long Lamb

*Commissioned Pastor
 Acting Head of Staff*

The Rev. Dr. Stephen W. Smith

Pastoral Support

Laurie Stafford

Ministry of Visitation

The Rev. Jim Huffstutler

Pastor Emeritus

Mission Statement

Moved by the Spirit, we strive to create an open and inclusive community embodying the love, forgiveness, and grace of Christ which we extend to ourselves, each other, our neighbors, and our world through nurturing relationships, creative celebrations, continuous learning, and transformational service.