



First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

First Press

December 2025



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What Child Is This?

What child is this, who, laid to
rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems
sweet
while shepherds watch are
keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels
sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners
here
the silent Word is pleading.

Nails, spear, shall pierce him
through;
the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and
myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high.
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary!

--William Chatterton Dix, 1871

Continue reading on the next page for Pastor Brian's description of our
Advent theme this year as we consider this carol.



Advent 2025 by Pastor Brian S. Symonds

Theme: What Child IS This? Beyond the Lullaby

Our approach to Advent is always as a time of waiting and preparing - we await and prepare for the arrival of the Christ child. So much is already, or will be expected of this little baby. And all the while we find ourselves in a time when so much seems to be broken, painful, and disconnected. Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is also the one whom shepherds guard and angels sing - the babe, the son of Mary.

Marcia McFee, the author of our Advent series, while considering what to prepare for this year's Advent Season writes, "How do we address the complexities of our time? What is the Gospel Word to us as we worry about so many things? How do we struggle to be faithful witnesses to the horrors we see unfolding all over this world of ours yet still proclaim the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love of the season? The Advent series this year could help us see Beyond the Lullaby into the difficulty of the socio-political-economic context that shaped the identity and story of the birth and life of Jesus. The Good News is that God chose to enter our trauma-filled world in order to know us, tend to us, teach us how to be in these times."

"We find the themes of oppression and corruption woven into the story of humanity and right into our lives, our histories, and our own narratives. And still, God is present with us, and continues to be the Word of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love even and especially in the midst of hard times."

We are being invited into the familiar story – into a narrative that may seem less like a lullaby and more like a page out of our own stories. Together, let us take a journey into Bethlehem with the holy family.

Advent 1	November 30, 2025	10:30am	Sanctuary
Advent 2	December 7, 2025	10:30am	Sanctuary
Advent 3	December 14, 2025	10:30am	Sanctuary
Advent 4	December 21, 2025	10:30am	Sanctuary
Christmas Eve	December 24, 2025	5:00pm	Sanctuary

Caroling	December 7, 2025	After Worship	
Longest Night	December 11, 2025	4:30pm	Chapel
Symphonie Jeunesse	December 14, 2025	3:00pm	Fellowship Hall



Notes

The *First Press*, the newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino, is edited by member Wendy Lamb. Please submit content to Wendy at newsletter@fpcsb.net.

The deadline for the January newsletter is Wednesday, January 17.
(Due to the Christmas/End-of-Year flurry, the earlier the better!)

Financial Notes

Financial Report as of October 31, 2025.

General Fund

	Actual	Budgeted	Over/(Under)
Pledges	\$289,336.52	274,910.00	14,426.52
Other Income*	\$175,217.26	143,787.16	31,430.10
Expense	\$385,479.78	450,714.56	(65,234.78)
Net Income	79,074.00	(32,017.40)	111,091.40

Division Consolidation

	October	Year to date
General Fund Net Income (Expense)	18,240.59	79,074.00
Deacons Net Income (Expense)	(30.57)	(4,122.40)
Net Operating Income (Expense)	18,210.02	74,951.60

Caroling!

After worship on Sunday, December 7.
Join us for a light lunch and an afternoon of caroling
to some of our members.



Symphonie Jeunesse Concert!

Join us in the Fellowship Hall
at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 14,
as the youth string ensemble plays a concert of
traditional Christmas music.

Board of Deacons 2025

Mindy Rueda, Moderator

Brian S. Symonds, Pastor

Steve Smith, Pastoral Support

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

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

Class of 2027: Richard Rodriguez, Jim Siegmund, Kyle Smith, Christian Usher

Session 2025

Brian S. Symonds, Moderator

Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

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

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

Class of 2027: Patrick Morris, Susan Skoglund, Katie Smith, Neal Williams

In Memoriam

October 2025

Doris Schiavone

February 16, 1931 - October 19, 2025

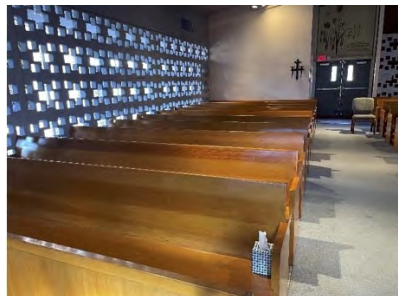
November 2025

James Babcock

May 16, 1953-November 21, 2025

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

Chapel Renovation/Who wants a pew? by James Welte, Facilities Manager



As you all may know, we are making some renovations to the Chapel. We will be installing new carpet and, to make the space accessible, most of the pews are going to be replaced by chairs; therefore, we will need to find the old pews a new home. If you are interested in a pew or know someone who is, please contact Mimi at the church office. The pews are free, but if you would like to make a donation to help offset the cost of renovations you are more than welcome to do so. They are about 10' long and we believe they are made from ash.

Thank you.

Our Many Athletic Interns

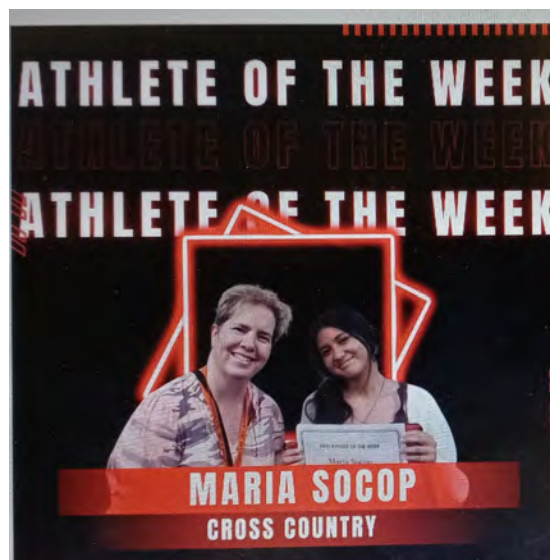
by Rick Rodriguez, Intern Supervisor

Our interns work hard to maintain very high GPAs and they also participate in extra-curricular activities, both at school and in their communities. Many of them also participate in multiple sports throughout the school year. They do all of these things while being a part of the internship program here at First Pres.

Since the beginning of the school year in August several of our interns have been selected for the award of "Athlete of the Week" at San Bernardino High School.

- **Ami Arana** for tennis, this was given to her and **Naydelin Torres Romo**; they are doubles partners in tennis and lost only once throughout the entire tennis season.
- **Maria Socop** for cross country. She has become a leader of the team and she continued to get better as the season went on. The sheer grit and determination improved her times and she is looking towards a great track season.
- **Ana Queveda** for tennis. She is a great teammate and a fierce competitor. She helped the tennis team win all year.
- **Eliana Socop** for cross country. Eliana, while just being a sophomore, was a big part of the girls varsity cross country team this year. Through her hard work and dedication she improved and got faster as the season went on.
- **Hefziba Arana** for water polo. She had dominating performances in the girl's water polo team's victories in their first matches of the season. Her "Athlete of the Week" award came on November 18, 2025.
- There was also a member of our LifeSkillz Circle who was awarded "Athlete of the Week." It was **Samantha Meneses** for cross country. She has been an important part of the cross country team all year.

There are many other interns who participate in sports throughout the school year, and I have no doubt we will see more of them earn the award of "Athlete of the Week" before the end of the 2025-2026 school year. We can be proud of our interns for all they do here at First Pres and everything they do at school including being excellent students and outstanding athletes.



Update Regarding Wendy by Wendy Lamb

On Reformation Sunday, I preached my last sermon in my role as Commissioned Pastor for a "season without a called pastor." You all surprised me with beautiful flowers, a gorgeous stole naming women saints, a gift card, and a cake! I was so touched at the marking of this incredible time.

Almost two and a half years ago, when Sandy left, after much discussion with me and with our Personnel Committee, Session chose to ask the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (called Healthy Pastors and Congregations at the time) if we could put off engaging an interim minister and allow me to work more hours (still part-time) and preach most weeks and fulfill some duties as acting head of staff. The committee had already appointed Steve Smith as the Session Moderator, and they agreed to the experiment.

While I was never installed as an Interim Pastor, the Committee considered me to be acting in that role. Therefore, they have acted to a certain extent as they would toward any interim pastor. They have asked that I stand down from any leadership role at First Pres San Bernardino for a year from the time of Pastor Brian's installation. As we have all discussed previously, this allows him to fully serve as the pastor of the congregation, and it allows the congregation, Session, Deacons, and other leaders to fully engage with him. It's a good step for all of us.

There is one difference in what the Committee has asked to what happened, for instance, two and a half years ago with Sandy. Because I am a commissioned pastor, I am a member of First Pres San Bernardino, not a clergy member of Riverside Presbytery. The committee has not asked me to cease all communication with the congregation, and they have not asked my family to change anything. I can still participate as a member and a friend (and, for now, as newsletter creator/editor).

This does offer an opportunity for me and for the presbytery. There are a number of congregations in the presbytery who might be interested in calling a commissioned pastor. I am free to discern if there is a calling for me in one of these congregations. This won't change my status at FPCSB, but might allow me to continue to do the work that this congregation helped me discover. It is an interesting time for me as I discern if I am truly called to ministry and not just called for a specific time and place at First Pres San Bernardino.

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Dec 1 Elaine Saenz
Dec 2 Sarah Godby
Dec 3 Cindi Pringle
Dec 5 Bobbie Terrell
Curtiss & Rebecca Allen
Dec 7 Zienna Long
Dec 9 Maddie Ramirez
Dec 11 Christi Showman Farrar
Deagan Belle
Dec 16 Jon Horstmann
Dec 18 Patrick Garcia
Dec 19 Jim & Carol Coyne
Kristin Arellano
Dec 20 Melodee Kistner
Dec 21 Danielle Garza
Dec 22 John Garten-Shuman
Dec 28 Lillian Franklin
Dec 29 Irene Sandoval & David Suverkrup
Dec 30 Charlotte Pringle

Keep Military Members in Your Prayers

Sgt Jacob Allen,

US Marines, MFR Band, New Orleans, Louisiana

Lt. Alejandro J. Balandran,

US Navy, Yokosuka, Japan

Corporal Ethan Gano,

US Marines, Yuma, Arizona

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, Jacksonville, Florida

Petty Officer First Class Noah L. Wierenga,

U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Diego

CW3 James Bentley Wilson,

US Army, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington

2nd Lt Grace Wilson

First Presbyterian Church

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 Deacons' Blood Drive First Sunday of Advent 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	1 5:00pm PW Coordinating Team	2 9:00am Food Distribution 12:00pm Circle of Faith 7:00pm Mensh Group	3 4:00pm Worship Committee	4 9:00am Food Distribution	5 9:30am Kerygma	6 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
7 Communion Sunday Second Sunday of Advent 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Christmas Caroling 5:00pm Galleons	8 5:00pm Nurture Committee	9 9:00am Food Distribution 11:30am Circle of Grace and Hope	10 12:00pm Staff Meeting 1:00pm Stewardship Committee	11 9:00am Food Distribution	12 9:30am Kerygma	13 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
14 Alternative Christmas Market Third Sunday of Advent 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 3:00pm Symphonie Jeunesse Winter Concert	15	16 9:00am Food Distribution 1:00pm Buildings & Grounds Committee	17 First Press Deadline 5:15pm SESSION Dinner 6:00pm SESSION Meeting	18 9:00am Food Distribution 9:00am Friendship Circle 6:30pm Sanctuary Choir	19 9:30am Kerygma 10:30am Food Bagging	20 9:00am Deacon Food Distribution 10:00am Straight Up AA 1:00pm Symphonie Jeunesse
21 Alternative Christmas Market Fourth Sunday of Advent 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Deacons	22 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	23 9:00am Food Distribution	24 Church Office closes at Noon 12:00pm Staff Meeting 5:00pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed.	26 Church Office Closed. 9:30am Kerygma	27 10:00am Straight Up AA
28 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	29	30 9:00am Food Distribution	31 Church Office closes at Noon	1 Church Office Closed	2 9:30am Kerygma	3 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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Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday
 9 am to 4:30 pm

Rev. Brian S. Symonds

Pastor

Head of Staff

The Rev. Dr. Stephen W. Smith

Pastoral Support

Laurie Stafford

Ministry of Visitation

Our 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.