



First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

First Press

March 2026



Views of the chapel



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New Worshipping Community on Campus

At the recent February Session meeting, after a thoughtful and imaginative conversation with Rev. Dr. Johnson Kĩriakũ Kĩnyua of The Church of Amazing Grace International, the First Presbyterian Church Elders invited the Church of Amazing Grace congregation to worship on our campus. This new adventure began Sunday, March 1st, when we were joined by approximately 75 new friends, including children, youth and families.

This PC(USA) congregation will be worshipping in the Chapel and holding Sunday School in rooms on the campus while they await the renovations on their new property right here in San Bernardino. As we conclude our morning worship Amazing Grace will begin their worship service. The Holy Spirit moves in exciting ways. So, when you see our new friends, say hi and learn a new name. Let's show Amazing Grace our welcome hospitality.

With Gratitude for new Friends,
Pastor Brian

Seeking continued



seeking:
honest questions
for deeper faith

continue this season of Lent.

With regards to staying curious, open, and nimble, something new you will notice is that our church leadership have invited and welcomed a congregation to temporarily nest with us while their permanent home is being renovated. The Church of Amazing Grace International, pastored by Rev. Dr. Johnson Kĩriakũ Kĩnyua, will be sharing the church campus with us beginning this month. Over the years, this PC(USA) congregation has counted among their different worshippers, ancestry from over 40 different communities and cultures in Africa. The children and youth practice Swahili during Sunday School, and the whole community gathers for lunch following worship.

While there are many differences, there are several commonalities that bring us together, such as our faithfulness to Jesus Christ and our desire to share Christ's Gospel message. It is the prayer of your church leadership and myself that this may be the beginning of building new relationships here in San Bernardino. Let us offer our new friends welcome, hospitality, and grace for all as we navigate this new way of being in relationship on this campus – curious, open and nimble to the Spirit's moving.

I continue to invite you to check out the Lenten season calendar for ways that you can join in this discerning act of Seeking. Continuing with Sunday morning worship, Quiet Nights, a special Maundy Thursday service, and culminating with the celebration of the Risen Christ on Easter Sunday.

Ready to Seek,

Pastor Brian



Our series for Lent, Seeking, continues by inviting us to ask honest questions to deepen our faith. At each of our worship services and experiences you may be asked a question or questions that can feel restorative (“Can these bones live?”), or like a charge or challenge (“Who will you listen to?”), some are hopeful and curious (“How do we begin again?”). None of these may lead to answers immediately or ever, and that is okay, but they may eventually help us find clarity and a new perspective. This Lent, I invite you to engage in the spiritual practice of seeking. I encourage you to stay curious, open, and nimble. My hope is that these questions will soften your assumptions and expand your perspectives. I pray that these questions will create a safe space to explore – to be drawn more deeply into the fullness of life, into the heart of God. These are words were originally expressed by Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow. And I thought they worked well for us as together we

Lenten Schedule

Seeking

Thursday, Mar 5 – Quiet Nights @ 5:30pm (Fireside Lounge)

Sunday, Mar 8 – Lent 3 *“Will You Give Me a Drink?”*

Thursday, Mar 12 – Quiet Nights @ 5:30pm (Fireside Lounge)

Sunday, Mar 15 – Lent 4 *“Who Sinned?”*

Thursday, Mar 19 – Quiet Nights @ 5:30pm (Fireside Lounge)

Sunday, Mar 22 – Lent 5 *“Can These Bones Live?”*

Thursday, Mar 26 – Quiet Nights @ 5:30pm (Fireside Lounge)

Sunday, Mar 29 – Palm Sunday *“Where Are You Headed?”*

Thursday, April 2 – Maundy Thursday @ 5:30pm (Chapel) *“Will You Wash My Feet?”*

Sunday, April 5 – Easter Sunday *“Who Are You Looking For?”*

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 newsletter is the Fourth Wednesday of each month (the day Session meets. As you work on minutes, think about newsletter.)

The deadline for the April newsletter is Wednesday, March 25.

Financial Notes

Financial Report as of as of January 31, 2026.

General Fund

	Actual	Budgeted	Over/(Under)
Pledges	\$28,637.38	29,122.00	(484.42)
Other Income*	\$16,191.69	17,643.93	(1,452.24)
Expense	\$57,681.28	49,058.75	8,622.53
Net Income	(12,852.01)	(2,301.82)	(10,550.19)

Division Consolidation

	January	Year to date
General Fund Net Income (Expense)	(12,852.01)	(12,852.01)
Deacons Net Income (Expense)	(789.52)	(789.52)
Net Operating Income (Expense)	(13,641.53)	(13,641.53)

Mark your calendars with these upcoming Deacon events--

Mountain Mike's Fundraiser- April 15, 2026

1st Blood Drive- June 7, 2026

2nd Blood Drive- October 11, 2026

More details to come.



March Birthdays and Anniversaries

Mar 2	Kristine French Lynda Savage Kurt Star
Mar 3	Teofila Rosemarie Fletcher Asher Gano
Mar 5	Joyce Lyons
Mar 7	Kathy Showman
Mar 9	Sherman Ballard Brent & Joanna Nord
Mar 12	Richard Rodriguez
Mar 13	Adam Kistner Dotti Garcia
Mar 14	Breanna Nord
Mar 18	Rebecca Nelligan Todd & Elizabeth Wright
Mar 22	Laura Munz
Mar 23	Grant Garcia
Mar 24	Randy French Linda Saenz
Mar 26	Marianna Fowles
Mar 27	Noé Falconi
Mar 29	Reyna Jones Stephanie Ross

Board of Deacons 2026

Mindy Rueda, Moderator; Steve Smith, Pastoral Support

Class of 2026: Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda, Chris Wright-Thomas

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

Class of 2028: Rebecca Allen, Amy Gano, Dave Thomas, Brent Nord

New Food Donation Focus and Heartfelt Thanks by Rick Rodriguez

Great News!

For the past year, the Food Ministry has been asking the congregation for specific foods because our primary food supplier for Tuesday & Thursday, Feeding America, was short on essentials. Your generous donations got our program and community through this shortage. Thank You.

We are happy to report that we recently were able to make some large Feeding America orders. If you look in the corner of Fellowship Hall you will see pallets stacked high with canned food items.

A Shift in Focus

Because we are now well-stocked with standard canned goods, we are shifting our donation focus to a specific, high-need group: **neighbors experiencing homelessness or living without kitchen access.**

The food items we put in these bags are ready to eat out of the bag and we try to include a balance of fruit, meat, drinks, and snacks. The hardest items to keep in our inventory for these bags are "pop-top" cans.

How You Can Help

We are asking the congregation to refocus food donations on the following:

- **Pop-Top or Pouch Proteins:** Canned chicken, fish, or meat.
- **Pop-Top Meals:** Chili, Spaghetti-Os, or Hearty soups.
- **Pop-Top Fruit:** Canned fruit (with pull-tabs).



We know these items can be harder to find or carry. If you'd prefer we do the "leg work," monetary donations are incredibly helpful. Our team monitors weekly grocery deals to stretch every dollar while meeting the most urgent needs.

With Gratitude

Our ministry is constantly evolving to meet the needs of our community, but one thing remains constant: **your faithfulness.** Thank you for the cans, the prayers, and the financial support that allow us to serve our neighbors.

February Session Highlights

by Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

Session chose to shorten our meeting this month so members could attend the Rabbi Norman F. Feldheim Memorial Lecture at Congregation Emanu El.

Session approved two important things at our meeting. First, money from the Andrews Worship Fund was approved to upgrade the audio/visual equipment in our newly renovated chapel. This will enable livestreaming services in addition to improving the sound quality in the space. We hope to find new and innovative ways to use this newly refurbished space. Second, we approved allowing a new worshipping community, Amazing Grace International, to use the chapel and several rooms for their Sunday services beginning March 1st. Amazing Grace has plans to refurbish El Buen Pastor and the Home of Neighborly Services for their services and needed a place to worship while the work is being done. Their worship will begin at 11:30 so our paths may cross. Please reach out and welcome them!

In Memoriam

February 2026

Jeoff Molcan

October 12, 1947-February 2, 2026

Cheryl Musacco-Thomas

October 19, 1960-February 22, 2026

March 2026

Gerry Atkins

October 24, 1930-March 1, 2026

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

Session 2026

Brian S. Symonds, Moderator; Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

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

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

Class of 2028: Robin Edwards, John-Paul Fletcher, Jonathan Horstmann, Lynda Savage

An Amazing Group of Students by Rick Rodriguez

The circle we sit in at the LifeSkillz Program is filled with a remarkable group of students from San Bernardino High School, SBHS. We have Sebastian, who has earned the prestigious position of the 2026 graduating class valedictorian. We have Ana and Pati who have both been named salutatorians for the 2026 graduating class. We have a group of girls, Hefziba, Pati, Ami, Saida, Marlen and Maria who are part of the team who just won the CIF Finals in Girl's Water Polo. All of these girls had to practice daily for water polo, were involved in other extracurricular activities and still maintain impressive GPAs.

We have Ana, who was named the senior Phoenix Scholar at SBHS for the second quarter of the school year and Kristal who was named the freshman Phoenix Scholar. This award is given to the student with the highest GPA in their class. We have Naydelin and Ami, who were the team leaders on our last intern team. Their technique on how they made cooking bags for the Food Ministry was so good and so fast, I allowed them to come back for part of the first day of our new intern term to show our new team their technique. All of our intern teams will be using this technique in the future.

There are other students in our current LifeSkillz Circle with personal stories I have learned about that makes their personal strength and character things to admire. We have one girl who cannot join any extracurricular activities after school because of responsibilities at home, so she came to LifeSkillz. We have another girl who has been like a caregiver for her disabled mother since she was a young girl and still maintains an excellent GPA. These are just two of many of the stories I have heard from these students. There are many others.

On Monday mornings, when I look around our LifeSkillz Circle, I always feel blessed by the amazing group of students in our circle and also how many I have had the opportunity to really get to know because they have been in the Internship Program at First Pres. In our current group all but about 5 or 6 have been interns. When these young people are in the Internship Program, I spend additional hours on Saturdays with them and this gives me the distinct opportunity to listen to their personal issues.

The members of our church family can continue to be proud of both the LifeSkillz Circle and Internship Programs and the wonderful students involved in these programs.

A Note from our Presbytery Leader



Dear Siblings in Christ.

It is with great excitement and deep gratitude that I thank Riverside Presbytery for endorsing me as the **candidate for Co-Moderator of the 227th General Assembly**. Your unwavering support and encouragement have truly inspired me and affirmed my calling.

San Diego Presbytery nurtured me from the very beginning and sent me forth on this journey. Riverside Presbytery, in turn, has shown me what it truly means to lean into God's promises for God's beloved people. I have witnessed firsthand how God's abundant blessings overflow in our congregations, our pastors, and our entire community. It is a profound honor to serve as your Presbytery Leader. My greatest hope is that we will continue to walk faithfully together, united in covenant with one another and with God. We are a people defined by resilience, love, and compassion—rooted always in God's steadfast faithfulness.

In Christ!

The Rev. Dr. Frances Lin

Presbytery Leader, Riverside Presbytery

If you would like to learn more about this, office administrator Mimi Lange can share with you a letter to the Presbytery and a Press Release from Rev. Dr. Lin and her co-candidate Rev. Dr. Sean Chow.

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

First Presbyterian Church

March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion Sunday 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	2 5:00pm PW Coordinating Team 5:00pm Worship Committee	3 9:00am Food Distribution 12:00pm Circle of Faith 7:00pm Mensch Group	4	5 9:00am Food Distribution 5:30pm Lenten Quiet Night	6 9:30am Kerygma	7 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
8 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Choir Practice	9 5:00pm Nurture Committee	10 9:00am Food Distribution	11 12:00pm Staff Meeting	12 9:00am Food Distribution 5:30pm Lenten Quiet Night	13 9:30am Kerygma	14 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
15 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Deacons	16	17 9:00am Food Distribution 1:00pm Buildings & Grounds Committee 1:00pm Circle of Grace and Hope	18 1:00pm Stewardship Committee	19 9:00am Food Distribution 9:00am Friendship Circle 5:30pm Lenten Quiet Night	20 9:30am Kerygma 10:30am Food Bagging	21 9:00am Deacon Food Distribution 10:00am Straight Up AA 1:00pm Symphonie Jeunesse
22 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	23 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	24 9:00am Food Distribution	25 First Press Deadline 12:00pm Staff Meeting 5:15pm SESSION Dinner 6:00pm SESSION Meeting	26 9:00am Food Distribution 5:30pm Lenten Quiet Night	27 9:30am Kerygma	28 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
29 Palm Sunday 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	30	31 9:00am Food Distribution	1	2 Maundy Thursday 9:00am Food Distribution	3 Good Friday 9:30am Kerygma	4 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA

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

First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

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Monday-Thursday
8:00 am to 4:00 pm

The 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.