



First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

# First Press

May 2026



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## Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery

San Bernardino was well-represented when the Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Riverside gathered at Calvary Presbyterian Church on April 25. We conducted PW business, led by Dotti Garcia. We heard reports from Susan Skoglund (pictured lower right), Debbie Law, and Sylvia Karcher regarding their time at the United Nations seventieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70). The main speaker of our event was Kelsey Law (upper left), Vice-Moderator of Churchwide Presbyterian Women and member of FPCSB (Yes, we're proud). Kelsey, a research scientist, spoke about women in STEM and the 70th anniversary of Women's Ordination in the Presbyterian church. We were reminded, "PW are the architects of ministries that are radically inclusive" and that "justice is at the heart of God. Righteousness and justice belong together."

During the gathering, we sang "God of Justice," a hymn written by the Rev. Lizzie Green, a member of the Ecumenical Women leadership who wrote it for the worship service for CSW70. This is the first verse:

*God of justice, God of freedom,  
 hear the cries for truth and right;  
 When our systems fail your children,  
 shine your clear and guiding light.  
 Through oppression, fear, and silence,  
 speak the word that breaks our chains;  
 call us forth with strength and courage,  
 till your justice shapes our ways.*

# Pastor's Reflection

## A Season of Celebrating



*The old has gone, the new is here.” -2 Corinthians 5:17*

May begins the time of year marked by endings flowing into new beginnings. This month and the next are full of celebrations of all kinds - spring births, graduations, summer vacations, and wrapping up one endeavor well so we can confidently begin another. Who we were and are is not who we are becoming. Did you follow that? Our lives are ever changing, and we are always transforming. As Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians, “the old has gone and the new is here.”

The beginning of April found me reflecting on my first Holy Week and Easter with FPCSB, and it was so special and so memorable. Not only did we get to explore together the theme of seeking after God and knowing that God seeks after us, but we shared meals together, and engaged in holy spiritual practices on Maundy Thursday co-led with Rev. Nancy Wiens. Returning to the church on Holy Saturday to see the blossoming of the Garden in the sanctuary was a wonderful display of vibrancy and beauty...and I'm speaking of all those folks enthusiastically participating. And then to share the Easter liturgy with a few of our youth, amazing music, and bringing back in the Alleluia was a soul-feeding way to find the culmination of the entire Lenten season.

The end of April, I was traveling to Arkansas with 30 other Presbyterian Clergy to attend the CREDO conference. Something I longed for and yet had no idea what I was in for - to many of my friends I likened it to summer camp for pastors. We spent our days in workshops and lectures, engaging spiritual practices, and processing our learnings within our small groups. Eating delicious meals and enjoying the very green camp grounds. Focusing on our own spiritual, physical, emotional and financial health led us through some spirit-led discernment and self-discoveries. The impact, I hope, will last with me for some time to come.

And now in May we will be celebrating important educational milestones with our young people. On May 10th we will be celebrating those from our Fellowship of the Carpenter High School and College Graduations. Then on May 24th, we will honor our Life Skillz graduates with a service of recognition during our 10:30 a.m. worship. And finally on May 29th I, your very own pastor (not so much a young person), will graduate with my Doctor of Ministry degree. Although we never really stop growing, our stories shift from growing to learning about and navigating the next chapters in our lives.

As we navigate our own waters of transformation here at FPC, I invite us all into a time for celebration – celebrating each other, our accomplishments, our relationships, and our becoming more of who God is calling us to be. So, let's do it with great joy. The tagline of the Refuge (A hub for healing community, social action, and creative collaboration in North Denver) may help us embody the joy of celebration, “Throwing parties, sharing stories, finding hope, practicing the ways of Jesus as best as we can.”

*God, give us eyes to notice transformation in our own lives and those around us.*

*From brief prayers of gratitude to big, creative parties, help us honor and celebrate the good.*

*Keep reminding us that the old is always dying, the new is always coming.*

*We want to keep resurrecting. Amen.*

Feeling Renewed,

Rev. Brian S. Symonds (*nearly Rev. Dr.*)

## 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

# Notes



**Symphonie Jeunesse**  
 Mother's Day Concert  
 First Presbyterian Church,  
 Sunday, May 10,  
 3:00 p.m.



## Financial Notes

Financial Report as of March 31, 2026.

### General Fund

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Over/(Under)</u>
Pledges	\$88,200.66	87,366.00	834.66
Other Income*	\$56,376.24	52,579.79	3,796.45
Expense	\$154,556.19	147,176.75	7,379.44
Net Income	(9,979.29)	(7,230.96)	(2,748.33)

### Division Consolidation

	<u>February</u>	<u>Year to date</u>
General Fund Net Income (Expense)	3,382.89	(9,979.29)
Deacons Net Income (Expense)	(673.48)	(4,274.66)
Net Operating Income (Expense)	2,709.41	(14,253.95)

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](mailto: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 June newsletter is Wednesday, May 27.**

## Graduates!


If you are a graduate or have a family member graduating from high school, college, or graduate school this spring, please send their name, relationship to congregation members, school and degree (if appropriate), and graduation date to [Newsletter@fpcsb.net](mailto:Newsletter@fpcsb.net) by Wednesday, May 27, for recognition in the June 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.




*Maria*




Alexandra Mayschondt

*Tony*



Richard Bermudez

*Anita*



Olga Perez Flora

# WEST SIDE STORY®

The Inland Master Chorale presents a concert performance of **WEST SIDE STORY**. This landmark musical features Leonard Bernstein's award-winning score with lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by Arthur Laurents. Musical selections include *Maria, America, Tonight, I Feel Pretty, and Somewhere.*

Concert Sponsor: Marilyn Solter      Season Sponsor: Jack & Laura Dangermond

**Sunday, May 17**      **University of Redlands**  
**4:00pm**      **Memorial Chapel**



Single Tickets  
Box office

Adult Advance: \$35  
 Student/Child\*: \$10  
 Adult at the Door: \$40

\*Children under 5 not admitted.

Tickets: [www.inlandmasterchorale.org](http://www.inlandmasterchorale.org)

## The Season of Easter Continues...

"Close Encounters of the Divine Kind: Jesus' Appearances"

At the risk of sounding too kitschy or cliché, I chose to title my sermon series for the season of Easter (the time between Easter Sunday and Pentecost) playing off of the 1977 film, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. Wikipedia writes of the film, "an ordinary man whose life unravels after a mysterious UFO sighting leaves him obsessed with uncovering the truth, drawing him into a global quest toward a life-changing event. Spielberg's visually stunning and emotionally resonant sci fi blends mystery, human drama, and awe inspiring spectacle." If we simply switch out the words 'UFO sighting' with 'Jesus sighting', this synopsis could easily be talking about the appearances of Jesus following his crucifixion and burial in the tomb. Our faith makes one distinction from Spielberg's however, our story would not be categorized as sci-fi.

As I have done for the previous few Sundays, and will continue through the next several Sundays, I am going to pair the different passages of the post burial appearances of Jesus as told in the gospels of John and Luke, and Acts with select chapters from Kathy Escobar's book entitled *Practicing: Changing Yourself to Change the World*. Jesus' teachings, miracles, and crucifixion were only part of the story of our faith. It is his resurrection and what happened immediately after that was life-changing for his followers, and for us. Using some of Escobar's words we will more deeply explore the extraordinary in the ordinary – offering peace, touching scars, breaking bread, and a conversation all seem like such ordinary and mundane activities, and yet Jesus did something extraordinary in and with each of those moments.

Make note of the Sunday morning worship service schedule below, along with the celebrations of Youth & Grad Sunday, and Pentecost & LifeSkillz Sunday.

+Pastor Brian

### Sermon Schedule: May-June

Close Encounters of the Divine Kind: Jesus' Appearances (series continues)

May 3 - Luke 24:13-35 – Hidden in Plain Sight

May 10 - John 21:15-19 – Three Times & Sealed  
(Youth & Grad Sunday)

May 17 - John 21:1-14 – A Fish Fry of Unbelievable Measure

May 24 - Acts 1:1-11, 2:1-21 – A Mighty Wind  
(Pentecost & LifeSkillz Sunday)

Preaching from the Lectionary

May 31 (Trinity Sunday) thru June 28

Rev. Samuel Roberts will be preaching May 31 and June 7  
while Pastor Brian is away

## May Celebrations

May 1	Lily Bolaños Aidan Morris
May 4	Erika Mantei
May 6	Kaiyah Dubois Katie Willis
May 7	Brian Gano Maggie Willis
May 9	Chasen Bricker Rosalind Mantei Phil Savage III
May 10	Marissa Congdon Susan Skoglund
May 11	Tinka Ponder
May 12	Wendy Lamb
May 14	Carol Coyne
May 15	Lynn Usher
May 16	Jim Babcock
May 17	Sharon Louise Landeros Wanda Skipper Tim & Lynn Usher
May 21	Brian Symonds
May 23	Jim Morris
May 24	Trinity Conley Penny Ramirez
May 27	Jenna Garza Schneider
May 28	Mark Adelson Jon Preciado Maria Saenz Al & Mindy Rueda

**Youth and Graduation Sunday, May 10, Mother's Day.** Our youth have been preparing with Pastor Brian and they will lead worship together on this day. We will also celebrate our high school graduates and the graduates will participate in the sermon moment. We will have gifts for our motherly figures.

**Life Skillz Recognition Sunday, May 24.** Come celebrate with our Life Skillz seniors. Each week, some of us go across the street on Mondays and have breakfast and meaningful conversation with them. On this day, they will cross the street and join us in worship where we will recognize them and their many achievements.

## April Session Highlights

by Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

Session continued their study of Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0 where we explored the concept of Contact Theory which “proposes that if diverse groups spend extended time together, their intergroup conflict and the negative effects of racism and ethnocentrism will gradually decrease and possibly even disappear altogether.” We discussed how we have seen this in our own lives and the life of this church.

We approved the purchase of 15 more chairs for the chapel which is all that space can accommodate. The primary discussion revolved around two items from Buildings and Grounds Committee (B & G) which Dave Thomas presented and were ultimately approved. The first is plans for the room off the kitchen where the non-working dishwasher is housed. Oak Tree Learning Center is entering a new food program and needs space for an additional refrigerator and freezer, as well as storage. B & G determined this space will work for Oak Tree’s needs. The second involves a new state law that requires everyone conducting security for churches to be licensed and trained. Dave Thomas has been hard at work to interpret what this means for us and has consulted with B & G, Brian, outside agencies and Session. To meet these requirements, Dave, James and Rick will complete this training and the other volunteers on Sunday morning will receive training from the San Bernardino Police Department. The last item that may impact some is that to secure our campus on Sunday mornings, the gate from E Street will now be locked on Sundays to control access. While this may be inconvenient for some, the safety of our congregation and that of the Church of Amazing Grace International, is of utmost importance. Session expressed its deep gratitude for Dave Thomas’ incredible work for this church! We are extremely fortunate to have such a knowledgeable and dedicated volunteer.

### 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

### Investing in Our Community

by Rick Rodriguez

The Food Ministry and the Internship Program are two important ministries of First Presbyterian Church that directly serve our surrounding community while also strengthening the life of our congregation.

We are grateful for the continued partnership of Rauch Family Foundation which has supported these ministries for several years. We recently received \$25,000 in grant support for 2026 to help provide fresh food and pay intern salaries for work in the Food Ministry. We deeply appreciate their generosity, confidence in these programs, and ongoing commitment to the health of our community.

We also extend our sincere thanks to Cummings Toyota, a long-time supporter of many church ministries, especially those serving young people at San Bernardino High School. We recently received a total of \$10,000 in support of the Internship Program, which will help provide intern salaries and cover additional program expenses. We appreciate this investment in our interns who give us immense joy while learning new skills and providing important work to support many of our ministries.

We give thanks for the generosity of both The Rauch Family Foundation and Cummings Toyota as together we make meaningful investments in our community.

### 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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 Pastor on Study Leave 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	27 Pastor on Study Leave 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	28 9:00am Food Distribution	29 5:15pm SESSION Dinner 6:00pm SESSION Meeting	30 9:00am Food Distribution	1 9:30am Kerygma	2 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
3 Communion Sunday 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	4 5:00pm PW Coordinating Team 5:00pm Worship Committee	5 9:00am Food Distribution 12:00pm Circle of Faith	6	7 9:00am Food Distribution	8 9:30am Kerygma	9 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
10 Mothers' Day Youth and Graduate Recognition Sunday 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Choir Practice 3:00pm Symphonie Jeunesse Concert	11 5:00pm Nurture Committee	12 9:00am Food Distribution	13 12:00pm Staff Meeting 7:00pm Mensch Group	14 9:00am Food Distribution	15 9:30am Kerygma 10:30am Food Bagging	16 9:00am Deacon Food Distribution 10:00am Straight Up AA 1:00pm Symphonie Jeunesse
17 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Deacons	18	19 9:00am Food Distribution 1:00pm Buildings & Grounds Committee 1:00pm Circle of Grace and Hope	20 1:00pm Stewardship Committee 6:00 Session	21 9:00am Food Distribution 9:00am Friendship Circle	22 9:30am Kerygma	23 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
24 Life Skillz Sunday PENTECOST 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	25 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	26 9:00am Food Distribution	27 First Press Deadline Pastor Study Leave	28 Pastor Study Leave 9:00am Food Distribution	29 Pastor Study Leave 9:30am Kerygma	30 Pastor vacation 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
31 Pastor vacation 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	1 Pastor vacation 5:00pm PW Coordinating Team 5:00pm Worship Committee	2 Pastor vacation 6:00am Election polling 9:00am Food Distribution 12:00pm Circle of Faith	3 Pastor vacation	4 Pastor vacation 9:00am Food Distribution	5 Pastor vacation 9:30am Kerygma	6 Pastor vacation 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA

Please check the calendar on the website after Mimi has returned to the office for the most up-to-date information for May. [https://fpcsb.net/events\\_links/calendar](https://fpcsb.net/events_links/calendar)

## First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

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**Mailing Address:**

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[www.fpcsb.net](http://www.fpcsb.net)

**Office Hours:**

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.*