



JULY 2026

With open eyes, open minds, open hearts, and open hands, we are becoming God's love in action

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RECLAIMING US EVENT



On June 20th, First Pres San Bernardino hosted the space for a Juneteenth celebration. This is email correspondence between Pastor Brian and Johanna from Reclaiming Us.

Johanna,

On behalf of the congregation and the church leadership, THANK YOU! for inviting us to host the space for the Juneteenth celebration. The energy and the good people present were

amazing. And the relationships that were built and nurtured was what we've been praying for. We desired to have an opportunity to meet the community, and simply be present with you all. That was accomplished 100%!

I will be meeting with the church leadership tomorrow evening to share feedback. I look forward to them being overwhelmed with feelings of excitement and joy.

Maybe this could be the first of many or other events in partnership with Reclaiming Us.

Peace to you my friend, and know you are always welcome here at FPCSB.

--Rev. Dr. Brian S. Symonds

Pastor Brian,

Thank you so much for this beautiful message. It truly means a lot. We are grateful that FPCSB opened its doors and heart to our community for the Juneteenth Celebration. The love, energy, and connection that happened on that campus was exactly what Reclaiming Us hoped for, and I'm thankful your congregation felt that too. I would be honored for this to be the first of many opportunities to partner and continue building community together.

Please extend my gratitude to the church leadership and congregation.

Peace and gratitude,

--Reclaiming Us

Stay in Touch



(909) 882-3308



<https://fpcsb.net>

pres.first@gmail.com

Office Hours

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

Pastor's Reflection: God-Sized Wonder and Awe



Following my graduation at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, I spent my recent vacation with friends on an Alaskan cruise concluding with a few nights in Vancouver B.C. I had flown from Pittsburgh to Seattle. Seattle I have visited several times, but never have I traveled any further north. I then flew from Seattle to Anchorage, AK. One of the first intentional visits on the cruise was to Glacier Bay National Park. The captain cruised the ship so close to the glaciers you could almost reach out and touch the ice. Later I shared with my friends that I had to step back every so often and remind myself that we weren't on a lake high in the mountains. We were on the sea...those majestic mountains with their snow caps reaching the water line, and the glaciers slowly but surely resting into the ocean was a sight new to me, and it took my breath away.

There are many times in our lives when the experiential moments are so new that we can do nothing more than step back and be absolutely present in the moment - to be filled with wonder and awe, and even to be humbled in a way, due to the lack of experience with something, that the words literally escape us. In a devastating way, I experienced this when my parents passed away. I even got a tattoo on my forearm of a mountain range with the words inked beneath it, "...the other side." It is simply a reminder that the new and unknown we are experiencing may just take us to a place of awe and wonder - humbling us so much so that we are left speechless. And the other side has to offer something better. I pray that we all can embody this kind of wonder with every new experience, especially as it relates to how God is being revealed to our congregation in this new season.

The Session has been diving into the book, Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0. Much like a workbook it is intended to guide a group of people into better understanding why and that reconciliation with our neighbors is so important to us and to God. We are nearly halfway through and I believe God knew we were ready to experience something new. That new thing was a Juneteenth celebration cohosted with Reclaiming Us (San Bernardino County Black Pride). Two groups of people very different from our community which gathers on Sunday mornings, approached us with a request to host the space to have their celebration. Our leadership said yes, and then stepped back as Reclaiming Us led the way. God provided an opportunity for First Pres to step back and experience the gifts of our neighbors and something new. Although not quite speechless, the experience left our church members with very few words and a whole lot of room for wonder and awe.

It was an extraordinary event. Many different vendors, including children promoting their creative business ideas, spread across the side lawn sharing information, providing tasty treats, and selling crafts. The DJ played music different than the fabulous organ pieces offered on Sunday mornings. And the group dancing even inspired several folks from FPC to show off their moves. Games for all ages were played, incentivized with prizes for all who participated. And visitors from the neighborhood, other San Bernardino organizations, and even Supervisor Baca's office were drawn to the event, leaving having felt like they were part of something important - because we all were.

Experiencing something new can be a little scary, risky, and even stir up some anxiety. It's difficult to set aside our desire to be the experts in the room when we have no expertise to share in that moment. If we can allow the wonder and awe to consume us momentarily, enough to leave us speechless, just maybe we will leave room for the Spirit to move among and through us. The promise is the other side of the newness can be wonderful and possibly amazing. May we continue to experience new things with our neighbors and in our neighborhood with a God-sized wonder and awe.

Our Interns See We Are Truly Inclusive to All

by Rick Rodriguez

On Saturday, June 20, 2026 we had a "Pride Wellness Activation" event here at First Pres (sponsored by Reclaiming Us). We had three interns, Lily Aceves, Esme Caballero and Naydelin Torres Romo work at a church booth giving out free socks to anyone who wanted them. They did this in a kind and friendly way. (see the picture below). They also helped with the set up before the event started and break down of church equipment after the event was over. These things were important to the event, they were not to be the first things these young ladies will remember about this event.

The things they will remember for a long time are:

- The fun they had participating in some of the games, tug of war and musical chairs.
- The 10 & 11 year old entrepreneurs who were there selling their goods and services.
- Watching the DJ show Pastor Brian and Cap't Dave how to dance to a couple of the songs he was playing.
- Listening to the musical artist, Triple Fiv, who came to perform and really feeling how her lyrics effected them or someone they know. Part of the lyrics in her song "Lost" are "I did everything right but I still get lost sometimes . .I'm surrounded by love but I'm still alone inside.". These lyrics and others our interns could relate to. And then have the artist come and spend time speaking with just them.
- They got to see the true openness and acceptance of First Pres through Brian's words and the actions of Brian, Dave & Chris Thomas and other members of our church community who came to the event.

This was a wonderful event that our interns said they really enjoyed and would want to be a part of again.



Photo from left: Mary Bolaños, Mario Bolaños, Pastor Brian Symonds, Amy Smith, Marion Wiens, Susan Skoglund, Laurie Stafford

Contemplative Retreat

Seven FPC contemplatives, including Pastor Brian, (of the 162 participants) attended the Cherished Belonging retreat presented by Stillpoint on Saturday, June 27th at Church of Our Saviour in San Gabriel. Guest speaker Fr. Greg Boyle, from Homeboy Industries, shared the message that God sends us to be messengers of compassion and love with all whom we engage along the journey. Fr. Boyle reminded us that "we go to the margins so that those on the margins can change us - not the other way around." Two of his 'homies' presented with him and shared how empowering and important the message of their added value and purpose in this world was for them to hear over and over again. Their poignant message was well received, "we're so used to being watched, but not seen!" The seven FPC contemplatives walked away tired and yet ready to truly see each other and to be changed by those in their midst.

NOTES

July Celebrations

- Jul 3 Mario Bolaños
Phil & Lynda Savage
- Jul 6 Judy Etherton
Dennis Stafford
- Jul 7 Jim & Dawn Morris
- Jul 8 Josie Babcock
- Jul 10 Jim Carter
Doris Nord
Donna Feit
Kevin & Wendy Lamb
Gill Snyder
- Jul 12 Trevor Cummings
Sherman & Joanne Ballard
- Jul 14 Margaret Doane
- Jul 19 Linda Tiger
- Jul 20 Ryan Nord
- Jul 21 Donna Garza
Ezra Joseph Morales
- Jul 22 Helen Babcock
Dennis & Laurie Stafford
- Jul 23 Cheryl Direen
Kevin Lamb
- Jul 24 Larry Marona
Elizabeth Franklin-Morales
Gary Saenz
- Jul 28 Charlene Peterson
- Jul 30 Linda Kaufman

In Memoriam

Phillip Morris, March 3, 1936 - May 11, 2026

Jenna Morin, April 25, 1991 - May 18, 2026

In life and in death we belong to God

Financial Report as of as of May 31, 2026

General Fund			
	Actual	Budgeted	Over/(Under)
Pledges	\$145,437.30	145,610.00	(172.70)
Other Income*	\$97,018.32	87,199.65	9,818.67
Expense	\$243,611.05	245,343.15	(1,732.10)
Net Income	(1,155.43)	(12,533.50)	11,378.07

Division Consolidation		
	May	Year to date
General Fund Net Income (Expense)	8,947.25	(1,155.43)
Deacons Net Income (Expense)	1,672.87	1,296.69
Net Operating Income (Expense)	10,620.12	141.26

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 August newsletter is July 22.**

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 LewisMcChord, Washington

June Session Highlights

by Amy Smith, Clerk of Session

Session continued its study of the book, Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0. We discussed how we can experience a shift in perspective, seeing things in a way we've never seen before. This leads to the realization phase which involves three essential tasks: reorientation, readiness and restoration. We discussed needing to choose to change our viewpoint and the various things that can lead to realization. Our partnership with Reclaiming Us and the Splash into Wellness event was a great opportunity to move into this phase. Brian stressed that we have already been doing this with our food distribution and relationship with San Bernardino High School, but there is more to be done.

The other main topic of discussion was the need to replace the ten doors in the classrooms that lead to the outside playground and parking lot which are deteriorating and becoming a safety issue. Due to financial concerns, it was proposed to do one per year. A lively discussion ensued where we brainstormed other funding sources that could accomplish this more quickly. We are hopeful one of these ideas will give us the resources for this project

Finally, we prayed for Neal (who was at the meeting on Zoom) for his heart surgery scheduled June 26th, along with others close to our community. We also shared where we had seen God at work in our meeting – so many places God is evident!

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

Celebrating our Graduates!



Rebecca (Babcock) Sanchez

Jim and Helen's granddaughter, Rebecca, graduated April 28, 2026 from California Baptist University. Rebecca is hoping to find a job working with sports teams and sports training/medicine. Rebecca was married to Christian Sanchez on June 13.



The Season after Pentecost

"In the summer, the days were long, stretching into each other. Out of school everything was on pause and yet happening at the same time..."

— Sarah Dessen, *Along for the Ride*



Prayer, Fruit and Giftedness – Summer Sermon Series

I am looking forward to what I have learned is usually a spirited time of worshiping in Fellowship Hall during the summer. The summer will bring with it what I hope will be series' of sensory acts of worship. July we will be using different styles and ways of praying creatively for each other and ourselves. August will be a discovery of pairing the fruit of the Spirit with different kinds of food from scripture – taste and see that the Lord *and scripture* is good. And September, through contemplation, we will dive into how to better see the gifts in others which God is constantly revealing around us...we just need to looking for and expect to see it.

+Pastor Brian

Sermon Schedule: July/Aug/Sept

July – Praying: Communally, Individually and Creatively

July 5 – Colossians 4:2-6 – “Beyond the Altar” – Pastor Brian

July 12 – 1 Thess 5:16-18 – “In the Room of Prayer, There’s no ‘Right Way’” – Pastor Brian

July 19 – Philippians 4:6-8 – “Prayer and Poetry: Proclamation and Pause” – Pastor Brian

July 26 – Rev. Dr. Steve Smith will be preaching

(Worship in Fellowship Hall)

Pastor Brian will be away July 26

August theme - Fruit of the Spirit – Food from Scripture

An exploration of the fruit of the Spirit paired with tastings of food from scripture, while worshipping at tables

August 2 – “The Fruit of Love: Agape”

August 9 – “The Fruit of Peace: Eirene”

August 16 – “The Fruit of Gentleness: Prautes”

August 23 – “The Fruit of Faithfulness: Pistis”

August 30 – “The Fruit of Patience: Makrothymia”

(Worship in the Fellowship Hall)

September – Mutuality of Giftedness: Discerning Missional Vocation

Pastor Brian will lead the congregation through theological assumptions and scriptural references from his doctoral thesis on the congregational work of discerning missional vocation.

September 6 – “Sent: A Missional Community”

September 13 – “Presence: Designed for Relationship”

September 20 – “Heard: A Storied People and Land”

September 27 – Preacher TBD

(Worship in the Fellowship Hall)

Pastor Brian will be away Sept 27

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

JOIN THE FUN!
SUMMER SOCIAL
Sunday, August 2, 2026

Directly after Worship (~11:30 a.m.)
In and around Fellowship Hall



Fun for all ages!

Hot Dogs! Games & puzzles!
Waterslide!

Wear or bring a swimsuit & towel to slide!



Enjoy hot dogs, sausages, and vegan hot dogs, buns (including gluten free), chips, and cookies.



First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

The Rev. Dr. Brian S. Symonds

Pastor

Head of Staff

The Rev. Dr. Stephen W. Smith

Pastoral Support

Laurie Stafford

Ministry of Visitation

First Presbyterian Church

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Hymn Sing Sunday 8:45am Choir Practice 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	29	30 9:00am Food Distribution	1	2 9:00am Food Distribution	3 Church Office Closed Independence Day 9:30am Kerygma	4 10:00am Straight Up AA
5 Communion Sunday 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	6 Church Office Closed 5:00pm PW Coordinating Team	7 9:00am Food Distribution	8 12:00pm Staff Meeting 7:00pm Mensch Group	9 9:00am Food Distribution	10 9:30am Kerygma	11 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse Auditions 10:00am Straight Up AA
12 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm SBPD Usher Training	13 Church Office Closed	14 9:00am Food Distribution	15	16 9:00am Food Distribution	17 9:30am Kerygma 10:30am Food Bagging	18 9:00am Deacon Food Distribution 10:00am Straight Up AA
19 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	20	21 9:00am Food Distribution	22 First Press Deadline	23 9:00am Food Distribution	24 9:30am Kerygma	25 10:00am Straight Up AA
26 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	27	28 9:00am Food Distribution	29 12:00pm Staff Meeting	30 9:00am Food Distribution	31 9:30am Kerygma	1 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA 1:00pm Jenna Morin Memorial Service

Please check the calendar on the website for the most up-to-date information for July.

https://fpcsb.net/events_links/calendar

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.