

First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

First Press



OCTOBER 2026

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

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Stay in Touch



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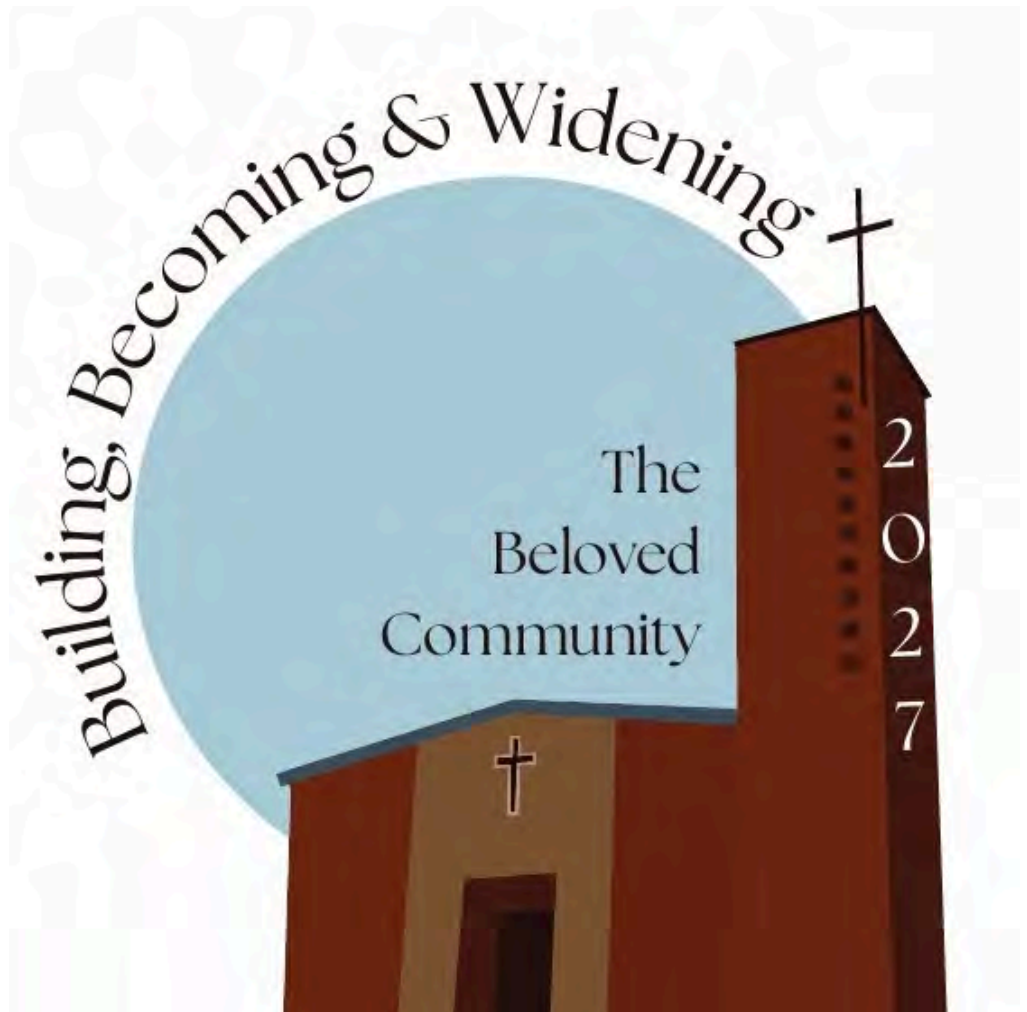


<https://fpcsb.net>

pres.first@gmail.com

Office Hours

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



You Are Invited! Stewardship luncheon, October 4, 2026 @ 11:45AM in the Fellowship Hall. Workshop. Come for lunch, stay for an informative workshop on the creative act of faithful giving.

This newsletter is centered around "Why I give to Christ's Church." Read on to hear the different ways we give: Time, Talents, and Finances.

Pastor's Reflection: Resting in God's Love



Resting in God's love...

Trusting God's work in our lives and in the world, so we can cease from self-reliant striving.

Living with purpose in service to God, knowing our labor is not in vain.

Finding true rest in Christ's yoke, which lightens the burden of life's toil.

Dear Church Family,

While on Study Leave at the end of September in Seneca Falls, NY (Finger Lakes area Upstate), I was able to spend time with my good friend, colleague and classmate, Rev. Dr. Leah Ntuala. She is the Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls. I accompanied Leah on many of her community-based pastoral duties. We made a visit to the correctional facility in town where we conducted a brief lectio divina service for several of the inmates. I could tell that Leah has created a familiarity with the several in attendance. She trusted that God was present.



We then picked up my older son, Nathan, and we drove to Syracuse to pick up and then deliver food bags to residents in Seneca Falls. That night Nathan and I joined Leah for a trivia night at the local brewery where Leah seemed to be the most popular person. Saturday evening we attended the local high school soccer game. Nathan cheered on Leah's son's team, and we had snacks...again, Leah was well known.

Our final full day in Seneca Falls began with Leah sharing the sermon moment with me and the congregation. Her first question, "Why would you choose to do study leave here! From a city of 215,000 people to a town of 6,000?" Well, Leah and I share a love for mission and community based-ministry. We both see the importance of engaging the society at large where we serve. This is the best way to get to know the community and meet the neighbors. We ended the day by serving a hot meal at a community dinner program staffed by volunteers from several churches in town, each church taking on providing the food once a month for the dinner. She lives with purpose. Every day Leah and I took moments to talk and reflect on our ministries. We had delicious food, refreshing beverages, and enough laughs to last me until my next visit.

Leah shared stories with me of members who passed and the legacies they left, youth in the community (one we met standing in line at the grocery store) and having watched them grow up and who played on teams or had classes with her kids. One of her last stories she told me was that of her march from her church to the nearest detention center – a 78 mile journey. She relied on her friends and communities to provide shelter at night and food and water during the day. All to send a message to the powers that be that all of her neighbors
(Continued on next page)

Pastor's Reflection Continued



deserve dignity and are children of a loving God. Over her nearly 16 years of serving this church, her faith community has expanded from the ~35 people in the pews on Sundays to hundreds and possibly thousands around the Finger Lakes area.

My time with Leah had me considering all that we are doing together as a community of faith, I can appreciate that I may have stepped up the level and frequency of activities here at the church. So, the concept of resting in God's love came to mind, maybe just for me, but I bet many of us can be reminded that these four simple words are an invitation for each of us, even as we continue to live vibrantly. Trusting God's work, living with purpose, and finding true rest is the exact recipe for balancing the excitement, the grief, and the commitments of being God's people. May we take joy in what God has done, and seek the joy in what God is doing.

Feeling Joy-filled,
Rev. Dr. Brian S. Symonds



**Blood Drive: October 11, 2026.
Sign up and give blood.
The need is great.**

NOTES

October Celebrations

Oct 1	Michael Snyder
Oct 2	Julie Aguilera
	Dave Thomas
Oct 4	Jennifer (Coyne) Scerra
	Lisa (Coyne) Star
Oct 5	Caleb Christopher Jones
Oct 7	Carmen Avila
	Edward Munz
Oct 9	Phyllis Hough
Oct 11	Zachary Garcia
Oct 12	Mimi Lange
	Owen Morris
Oct 17	Jacob Babcock
	Bobbi Cummings
Oct 20	Robin Edwards
Oct 21	Marilyn Kraft
Oct 22	Adam Nord
	Neal Williams
Oct 23	Thomas Patrick Dunn
	Adelaide Shenton
Oct 28	Joshua Fletcher
Oct 30	Mario & Mary Bolaños
	Rebecca Allen
Oct 31	Brooke Dvorak

In Memoriam Frank Thomas

February 7, 1930 - September 16, 2026
In life and in death we belong to God

Financial Report as of as of August 31, 2026

General Fund			
	Actual	Budgeted	Over/(Under)
Pledges	\$232,222.96	232,976.00	(753.04)
Other Income*	\$145,394.93	139,129.44	6,265.49
Expense	\$394,765.01	388,325.04	6,439.97
Net Income	(17,247.12)	(16,219.60)	1,027.52

Division Consolidation		
	August	Year to date
General Fund Net Income (Expense)	(5,775.53)	(17,247.12)
Deacons Net Income (Expense)	1,762.16	3,032.31
Net Operating Income (Expense)	(4,013.37)	(14,214.81)

The First Press, the newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino, is created and 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.) **The deadline for the November newsletter is October 28.**

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

Volunteer Spotlights

As the facility manager of 16 years at First Presbyterian Church San Bernardino, I have experienced many wonderful people both in the congregation and our community. It warms my heart to see how many people are used by God daily. There are many needs in our community, congregation and on the church grounds that could use a helping hand. As I look around at the variety of people, we have here at church, I see all the different skills, knowledge and love that it takes to make the world a better place. --James Welte

Dave Thomas by James Welte

We have great volunteers doing what they can to help around the church.

One person that I am especially fond of is Cap'n Dave Thomas. Although he is retired from the Fire Department, he is still putting out fires here at First Pres. Sometimes it is like he works here full time. I really admire and appreciate all the volunteer work he does. He sees a need and takes care of it. If it takes a few guys to make it happen, he gathers them up and the job gets done. The Cap'n never looks for praise and tries to stay somewhat under the radar, but his knowledge, skill and willingness to help makes him shine. He does all this with a kind heart and smile on his face. Thank you, Cap'n, for your service. I know you are a Cap'n, but I would like to nominate you for sainthood. Can I get a second?

Robin Edwards by Mary Bolaños

Unsung heroes are "unsung" precisely because they, themselves, never sing their own praises—which is ironic in the case of the subject of this little article since she actually sings in the choir.

Robin Edwards embodies the instruction Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount to not do good deeds publicly simply in order to be admired or praised. Whether officially serving as a Deacon or Elder while sitting on, writing minutes for, or even chairing multiple other committees, Robin quietly gives each task one hundred percent of her energy. In fact, even when her 'official' terms might have ended, she has continued to take on many of the duties managed by the various groups, including taking the lead in communion preparation and set-up each month. We are particularly and greatly blessed by Robin's continued organization and support of the various memorial services that FPCSB hosts. She organizes food, prepares the sanctuary and reception area, finds volunteers to help serve, and is there on the day of the memorial.

The Kaleidoscope Institute recognizes six "holy currencies": the currencies of Time and Place(time) ; Gracious Leadership(compassion); Relationship; Truth; Wellness(community well-being); Money. Robin continues to offer not just one or two of these but, in fact, every one of them and we continue to be blessed by her presence.

Brent and Breanna Nord by Rick Rodriguez

It takes many interns and volunteers doing many different tasks to keep the Food Ministry running smoothly. Brent Nord and his daughter Breanna Nord are two of these. Early every Friday morning we pick up retail rescue food from Northgate Market in Fontana. Brent drives his truck and brings the food and non-food items back to the church. He unloads the donations and then we must go through each item to make sure it is safe and suitable for distribution. This can all be a very slow and dirty process. Breanna gets to the church after the food is unloaded and helps examine and organize the donations into boxes. She then weighs the boxes, and logs the donations.

On the one Friday before our monthly Saturday Food Distribution Breanna stays to help prepare for the food we are picking up and she helps with other tasks (setup, paperwork, hygiene kits) until the Saturday food arrives. Brent leaves for a while and then comes back and helps unload the food when it arrives. Brent and Breanna both put cases of food on tables and then make the nearly 200 bags of food we will be giving out the next day during our Saturday Food Distribution.

The Food Ministry could not operate without the help of dedicated volunteers like Brent and Breanna Nord.

Jeanne Clark and Nancy Horstmann

by Robin Edwards

I would like to tell you about two people who have volunteered their time for our congregation. Jeanne Clark and Nancy Horstmann have volunteered to teach our young people and tell them the stories in the Bible during KidSpace, for at least six to eight years. They don't just teach on Sunday. Both spend many hours planning the curriculum, getting together to choose new books when needed and then develop activities to keep our children involved. Jeanne and Nancy also make sure the information is age appropriate as well as being interesting and enjoyable. They always have fun activities for KidSpace. I want to thank them both for being there for the children of our congregation Sunday after Sunday and volunteering their time. They are so faithful in their commitment to our children.

Our Summer to Our Fall Internship Team

by Rick Rodriguez

The Summer 2026 Internship Team did great work, often during very hot days. They were out mowing lawns, trimming some of the plants and trees around the church property and pulling weeds in the hot temperatures. The team leaders made sure the interns had plenty of water when working outside. All of the interns were trained on how to recognize signs of dehydration, so no one was overworked in the hot weather.

The summer team also had to make bags for our Food Ministry each week. This is usually over 100 bags to go to households who have the ability to cook food and another 30 to 40 “non-cooking” bags for households who are either homeless or live in a room and have no access to kitchen facilities.

Below you see a picture of the summer intern team.

On Saturday, September 19, 2026 our Internship Program Interviewing/Hiring Team of Steve Smith, Kristine French and Ariana Aceves interviewed 12 applicants and chose 2 intern team leaders and 4 interns for our Fall 2026 Internship Team. We have a team of 4 interns who have never been interns before. This will be a challenge for our Team Leaders, Hefziba Arana and Kristal Fuentes. Everyone in our church family knows Kristal, she serves coffee after our services on Sundays. Many of you also know who Hefziba is, this will be her 3rd intern term and she has helped with many events at the church.

Ariana and I, the two Intern Supervisors, look forward to start working with this team on Saturday, October 3, 2026. This will be the 31st Internship Program term. This program continues to benefit both First Pres and all of the San Bernardino High School students who become interns. Thank you to everyone in our church family who always make our interns feel welcome and know you are truly interested in their lives outside of what they do here at the church.



The Season after Pentecost: Stewardship-Advent



Sermon Schedule: Oct/Nov/Dec

October Theme – Becoming, Building, Widening the Beloved Community

Pastor Brian, along with several of our members and community partners will be sharing testimonies each Sunday as to how the ministry and mission of FPCSB has blessed them and the work they are able to do in our community because of who we are called to be and become.

October 4th - World Communion Sunday

(people will bring breads from different cultures)

2-3 members will share testimonies as to why they choose to give to the church.

Worship will be followed by the Stewardship Season Luncheon and Workshop.

October 11th – Internship Sunday

Two interns will share the sermon moment with Pastor Brian

October 15 at 5pm in the Chapel

(Special Service for Healing and Wholeness)

October 18th - World Food Sunday: Insecurity & Abundance

Mary Bolaños will lead worship along with representatives from the Food Ministry, Symphonie Jeunesse, Oak Tree Learning Center, and Key Essentials.

October 25th - Reformation Sunday

This service will focus on the musical gifts enriching our worship experiences.

We hope to include extra musical pieces, a bagpiper, brass ensemble, Symphonie Jeunesse, an original piece by William, and possibly an invitation to share what it means to them to be able to offer their gift of music.

November

Nov. 1 – All Saints Day

Nov. 8 & 15 – Lectionary preaching

Nov. 22 – Reign of Christ Sunday

Advent 2026

Hope as Horizon: The Inbreaking Through the Eyes of the Artist

Nov. 29 – The Clay & The Potter

Dec. 3 – Longest Night Service: Abundance

Dec. 6 – Comfort Comfort, My People

Dec 13 – Take Joy

Dec. 20 – Promises, Promises

Dec. 24 – The Inbreaking of Light and Love

Pastor Brian will be out...

October 17-24 Mary Bolaños will be leading worship along with testimonies from several people

November 2-8 Guatemala - PC(USA) – MesoAmerican Migrant Network

Rev. Dr. Steve Smith will be preaching on the 8th

November 23-28. Rev. Sam Roberts preaching on the 29th

(Pastor Brian will be leading worship that day)

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

September Session Highlights

The elders continued their discussion with the 6th chapter from Roadmap to Reconciliation. They explored what it might mean to move towards action with regards to acts of reconciling with our neighbors. This next step should invite us to ask ourselves difficult questions about risk and benefit to engaging our neighbors in authentic relationship. Pastor Brian will be inviting a few people to serve on a Reconciliation Task Force.

Pastor Brian shared about his study leave in Seneca Falls, NY, and his renewed passion for building community relationships right here in San Bernardino.)

The elders received the 2025 Financial Review, approved a few more facility maintenance expenditures, approved a 2027 Cost-of-Living Adjustment (wage increase) for all staff (except for Pastor Brian), and hired Dave Thomas to serve as the Head of Security.

Save-the-Date(s) - Fall Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 15th following worship. Officer Training on Saturday, January 16th and then the Ordination and Installation of officers on Sunday, January 17th.



Helping those who help others in our community by Dave Thomas

On August 14, many of you saw the story on the news of a San Bernardino man who was brutally kicked in the head while sitting in his jacuzzi. Greg Medina, a single Dad, works as a chef at Lutheran Social Services, the former Central City Lutheran Mission on H Street that our church frequently supported with dinners and serving in the past. Although his assailants were promptly arrested, Greg did a followup interview on the news saying he forgave his attackers. Unfortunately Greg was unable to return to work due to ongoing medical issues. Our Deacon's Community Outreach Committee were touched by Greg's humbleness and saw an opportunity to provide a financial donation to Greg through a GoFundMe page, along with a signed card wishing him a speedy recovery. A response was received from Greg's sister Eilena: "Thank you so much for your well wishes. The out pouring of love from the community has been so amazing, we honestly didn't expect it. Greg had to apply for disability due to ongoing daily pain and dizziness, thank you again."

Our Deacons are grateful for the opportunity to help someone who helps others 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



Oak Tree Learning Center Invites You To...

Building relationships can be fun and fulfilling. It also will take time, energy, and imagination. For just over four years now FPCSB has been host to the Oak Tree Learning Center supporting community families (~50 children) with affordable early childhood education right here on our campus. As we continue this relationship with Oak Tree, we are looking at ways to further engage our two communities. One way is by inviting more of our FPC folks to participate in Oak Tree community events. Below is information about the Trunk-or-Treat upcoming event with ways to participate. If you are interested in participating and helping to foster this relationship with the Trunk-or-Treat please reach out to the church office.

+Pastor Brian

Upcoming Opportunities to Participate and Partner October 30

Halloween Trunk or Treat

Help plan a theme and decorate an FPCSB Table (Trunk).

Do you have an idea for a fun theme, game, and/or want to hand out candy?

Be an FPCSB Table Host – Hand out candy,
answer questions about our church, and invite someone to worship.

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

October 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	28 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	29 9:00am Food Distribution	30 12:00pm Staff Meeting 5:15pm SESSION Dinner 6:00pm SESSION Meeting	1 9:00am Food Distribution	2 9:30am Kerygma	3 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA 1:00pm Linda Kaufman Memorial Service
4 Communion Sunday 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	5 3:30pm PW Coordinating Team 5:00pm Worship Committee	6 9:00am Food Distribution 12:00pm Circle of Faith	7	8 9:00am Food Distribution 5:00pm Pastor's Book Club	9 9:30am Kerygma	10 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
11 9:00am Deacon's Blood Drive 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Choir Practice	12 5:00pm Nurture Committee	13 9:00am Food Distribution	14 12:00pm Staff Meeting 7:00pm Mensch Group	15 9:00am Food Distribution 9:00am Friendship Circle 1:00pm Nominating Committee 5:00pm Service of Healing & Wholeness	16 9:30am Kerygma 10:30am Food Bagging	17 9:00am Deacon Food Distribution 10:00am Straight Up AA 1:00pm Symphonie Jeunesse
18 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Deacons	19	20 9:00am Food Distribution 1:00pm Buildings & Grounds Committee 1:00pm Circle of Grace and Hope 6:00pm Deacons' Dinner	21 1:00pm Stewardship Committee	22 9:00am Food Distribution	23 9:30am Kerygma	24 9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse 10:00am Straight Up AA
25 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	26 7:00am Deacons' Mimi's Fundraiser 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	27 9:00am Food Distribution	28 First Press Deadline 12:00pm Staff Meeting 5:15pm SESSION Dinner 6:00pm SESSION Meeting	29 9:00am Food Distribution	30 Oak Tree D Street Trunk or Treat 9:30am Kerygma	31 10:00am Straight Up AA 1:00pm Symphonie Jeunesse

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