First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino

First Press



NOVEMBER 2026

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

In this Issue

Pastor's Reflection	1-2
Notes	3
Wellness: Sleep	4-5
Volunteer	6
Interns	7
Worship Planning	8
Session Highlights	9
Calendar	10

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: Resting in God's Love

Dear Church Family,

Happy 1 Year!

Let's see, at 12 months I should be walking and pulling myself up, waving and pointing, and saying 1-2 words. But just wait, in the next few months I will be running, saying 3 words, and even scribbling! So much accomplished, and so much to look forward to.

I know those developmental markers are for infants, but what a metaphor! The first few months together I felt like I was crawling - to learn traditions, systems, and ways of doing things here at First Pres. I was still learning names, and probably wore a confused look on my face much of the time. And my words were so limited and possibly incited a confused look on many of your faces. And yet, here we are 12 months later,

Continued on next page

Pastor's Reflection Continued

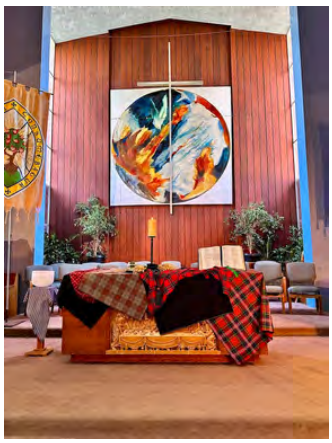


and I'm pulling myself up – up to the table, the pulpit, committees, difficult conversations, and many celebratory moments. My waving and pointing has been coupled with smiling - because of the great joy I've taken in developing relationships with you. And I hope my words are communicating something desired, hoped for, and even sprinkled with some comfort and excitement along with them.

We've travelled together through a whole year of seasons, losses, celebrations, gains, and even some wonderings. Remembering and celebrating the lives of so many loved ones who have passed away was also balanced with a service of installation, welcoming Church of Amazing Grace International to nest with us for five months, a new member, new church officers, celebrating Life Skillz and the interns, and several new worshipful services in addition to our rich and fulfilling Sunday morning services. The Chapel has been renovated to provide hospitality to the next ministries that will take place in that sacred space. The children and youth are experiencing a revitalization as we are partnering more with the Presbytery for combined activities and camping opportunities. And grants combined with planned gifts have been used to maintain the facilities, continuing to provide a safe and comfortable environment for us, our neighbors, and our community partners.

As we conclude this first year and look towards the next, I would like to invite us into recommitting to deepen our congregational and pastoral relationship. I will promise to create brave space for difficult conversations, lean on you and our leadership for encouragement and support when challenges arise or major issues need addressing, and to trust you and teach you to have healthy dialogue with one another and our neighbors. I would then ask of you come to me with your difficult concerns and your celebrations, enter with me into the brave space I hope to create, and trust that the Spirit is always leading and guiding my work with you. All this is what I pray will help us grow into who God is calling us to be in this new time.

Feeling Encouraged,
Rev. Dr. Brian S. Symonds



We celebrated Reformation Sunday on October 25, 2026 with plaid and music and shortbread. Pastor Brian presented Valentina with her third grade Bible as we honor the Reformation ideal that the word of God is for all of us.



NOTES

November Celebrations

Nov 2	Terri & Jorge Carlos
	Noah Wierenga
Nov 3	Curtiss Allen
	Steve Nolin
Nov 4	Joy Burgan-Price
Nov 5	Claudia Oakes
Nov 7	Dave & Chris Thomas
Nov 8	Cliff & Bobbi Cummings
Nov 9	Deb & Joy Burgan-Price
Nov 10	Martin Luther
Nov 13	Susan Zeitler
Nov 15	Alyssa Arellano
Nov 18	Marion Wiens
	Ed & Stephani Congdon
	Susan & William Zeitler
Nov 19	Earleen Dudley
	Linda Murray
Nov 20	David Dennis
Nov 21	Terry & Stephanie Ross
Nov 22	Ken Mantei
Nov 23	Dan Direen
	Wade and Chase Preciado
	Joyce Seeger
Nov 24	John-Paul & Stephanie Fletcher
	Larry Kistner
	Matthew Garcia
Nov 25	William Zeitler
Nov 26	Brad Smith
	Chris Wright-Thomas
Nov 27	Abigail Grace Willis
Nov 28	Raymond Olivarez
Nov 29	Norm Wallis
Nov 30	Sanai Wright

Financial Report as of as of September 3, 2026

General Fund			
	Actual	Budgeted	Over/(Under)
Pledges	$256,642.62	262,098.00	(5,455.38)
Other Income*	$170,902.72	156,439.37	14,463.35
Expense	$448,769.30	435,985.67	6,439.97
Net Income	(21,223.96)	(14,448.30)	(3,775.66)

Division Consolidation		
	September	Year to date
General Fund Net Income (Expense)	(3,702.64)	(21,223.96)
Deacons Net Income (Expense)	393.11	3,425.42
Net Operating Income (Expense)	(3,309.53)	(17,798.54)

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 Wednesday Session meets. This is early in Nov and December. **The deadline for the December newsletter is November 18.**

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



Everyday Wellness for God's People

Sleep

by Christa Wallis, LMFT

Sleep. Sleep Hygiene. Sleep Health. Sleep Disruption. Sleep Quality. Sleep Tracking. Sleep Score. You may have heard these terms recently in the news-the list goes on and on. As a culture, we are having conversations about the topic of sleep more now than ever, and there are valid reasons for this discussion. Sleep is a foundational pillar of wellness. Many times sleep disturbances are the first indicator of declining physical, emotional or mental health and while we may know inherently that sleep is important, recent research and scientific studies indicate that it is vital for maintaining systems of good health and wellness throughout our lifetime.

Of course we all know sleep routine is crucial; establishing a regular bedtime and wake-up schedule every day is key along with other factors like temperature for sleeping, comfort, light management, limiting caffeine intake late in the day, carbohydrate intake etc. These factors, combined with new findings influence our sleep health. There are new research recommendations about daily sunlight exposure, sleep temperature, dietary considerations, including the benefit of carbohydrates before sleeping, and low light exposure at night. Andrew Huberman of Huberman Labs and a professor at Stanford University, names some additional factors that contribute to quality sleep experiences.

Here are some sleep improvement protocols from Dr. Huberman:

Wind-Down Protocol: Establishing pre-sleep routines, like avoiding screens for 1–2 hours before bed and incorporating calming activities (like praying, reading, meditating and mindfulness techniques), helps your brain transition toward sleep.

Sleep continued

Temperature Protocol: Warm up to cool down-lowering your core body temperature is critical for falling asleep quickly and sleeping soundly, Huberman says. He explains that the sleep hormone melatonin is released in sync with the nightly drop in body temperature, so making sure that drop happens is key. One easy way to do this is to take a hot shower or bath before bed. This "can help induce drowsiness by warming hands and feet and by triggering a drop in core body temperature in compensation for this heating," Additionally, Huberman suggests creating a cool, dark, and quiet sleep environment, ideally with a room temperature between 60–68°F, to enhance restorative rest.

Light Management Protocol: Getting sunlight within 30 to 60 minutes after waking regulates melatonin production and energy levels. Dimming artificial lights in the evening signals your body to prepare for rest. "Of all the science I've studied over the years...light, and the incredible influence it has on every aspect of our health, is the subject that has thrilled and surprised me the most," shares Huberman. "We now have evidence to support why and precisely how the use of light can improve cellular, organ and body-wide health. It is an area of health just as crucial as sleep, exercise or nutrition."

Huberman advocates for viewing morning sunlight without sunglasses for at least 10 minutes within an hour of waking to elevate cortisol levels. "Cortisol is produced in the morning upon waking to signal alertness. Viewing sunlight shortly after waking can stimulate the body's natural cortisol production," helping to ensure you have the energy to tackle your day." Managing light exposure throughout the day anchors your circadian rhythm. Using bright, artificial lights or screens after sunset signals wakefulness and suppresses melatonin, according to sleep neuroscience research.

Dietary Protocols Eating a balanced, nutrient-dense diet is important for sleep health. Huberman recommends eating proteins earlier in the day and consuming carbohydrates before sleep. Also, he recommends eliminating consumption of caffeine 8 to 10 hours before sleep since caffeine's half-life is 5 to 7 hours for most people.

The new findings are important to note and these suggestions can improve sleep quality. As we adjust to another 'fall back' time change to standard time on November 1, 2026 these protocols may help ease this transition and beyond. Let it be so.

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

Food Ministry Volunteers

The Food Ministry has many volunteers who help in lots of different ways. This month I want to thank **Brenda Stringer** and her family. She brings several cases of cereal to the Food Ministry at least once each month, usually 2 or 3 Sunday's, before service each month. Her daughter Tanya Turner and grandson, Brandon Turner, help her bring in the cases of cereal. (Below left you will see a picture of the cereal Brenda brought on Sunday, October 25th.) Those of us who order food for the Food Ministry are so grateful to Brenda for her donations of cereal and other food items. Brenda also keeps her eyes open for deals on pop-top canned items that we cannot get from Feeding America, our main source of food for our Tuesday/Thursday Food Distributions. A few weeks ago, she found a deal on cans of complete meals, pop-top can of Beefaroni for $0.49/can. We have never been able to find them for less than $0.99/can. Since they are normally so expensive, we usually do not spend the limited Food Ministry funds on them. The Beefaroni pop-top cans are popular with the people we serve who are homeless or live in a single room and have no access to kitchen facilities. We were able to buy a large number of these cans of Beefaroni. This will allow us to put a can of this product in our "non-cooking" bags for several weeks.



As you can see, there are ways to help the Food Ministry without spending hours here at First Pres if you don't have the time. You can purchase the kinds of food that are in our weekly service bulletin or if you see a good deal on pop-top canned items while you are grocery shopping, you can just let me or Marilyn Kraft know on Sunday before or after service.

Again, many thanks to all Brenda Stringer does to help the Food Ministry. You are truly a blessing.

Our Fall 2026 Intern Team Tasks

by Rick Rodriguez

The Fall 2026 Intern team has been working for several weeks now. They have been doing the tasks that all our intern teams do, making bags for our Tuesday/Thursday food distributions, mowing the lawns on the church property, helping with Saturday food distributions and cleaning up the church property. In addition to these tasks the new team also cleaned out the rain gutters on the roofs of many of the buildings on our church property. Before the team could work on this project, they first had to be trained in the correct and safe way to use and climb up an extension ladder. Two of the interns working on this project had never climbed a ladder before. Showing the team how to safely use an extension ladder and safely climb onto the roof takes a little bit of time. My team leader, Hefziba Arana, who has had to use ladders several times, was a big help. She helped with the training and when our new interns saw how easy it was for her and relaxed she was when climbing the ladder, it gave them the confidence they needed.

Once we were all on the roof, I showed the team how to clean the rain gutters and to check if the drain lines were clear. The rain gutters and drain lines are at the edges of all the roofs. Hefziba also did great work by ensuring her team did not get too close to the edge of the roofs while cleaning out the gutters. The interns were able to clean the rain gutters all around the office building, Fireside Lounge, the classrooms and above the kitchen. Many of the drain lines were blocked by mud, leaves and other debris, yet they were able to clear most of the drain lines too. This was not an easy project and the interns were able to complete it. They also learned the safe correct way to use a piece of equipment they had not used before. (Below are a couple of pictures of the interns working on this project.)





The Season after Pentecost – Advent

Sermon Schedule: Nov/Dec

November
Nov. 1 – All Saints Day & Communion
Pastor Brian Preaching
Nov. 8 – Lectionary preaching
Rev. Dr. Steve Smith Preaching
Nov. 15 – Lectionary preaching
Pastor Brian Preaching
Nov. 22 – Reign of Christ Sunday
Pastor Brian Preaching

Advent 2026
Hope as Horizon: The Inbreaking Through the Eyes of the Artist
Nov. 29 – Setting the Chancel
Rev. Samuel Roberts Preaching
Dec. 3 – Longest Night Service: Abundance
Pastor Brian Preaching
Dec. 6 – Comfort Comfort, My People
Pastor Brian Preaching
Dec 13 – The Potter and the Clay
Pastor Brian Preaching
Dec. 20 – Promises, Promises
Pastor Brian Preaching
(Dec. 21 6-8pm Las Posadas at the Garcia Center for the Arts)
Dec. 24 – The Inbreaking of Light and Love
Pastor Brian Preaching



Pastor Brian will be out…
November 2-8 Guatemala - PC(USA) – MesoAmerican Migrant Network
Rev. Dr. Steve Smith will be preaching on the 8th
November 23-28 Rev. Samuel Roberts preaching on the 29th
(Pastor Brian will be leading worship that day with Rev. Sam preaching)
December 28 – Pastor Brian's annual 2-week vacation
January 13 (Preachers TBD)

October Session Highlights

Session met on October 28th and continued our study of The Road to Reconciliation 2.0. The chapter focused on the Activation Phase where we decide "how to answer the challenging question What then should we do?" This phase revolves around four components with the acronym CARE – Communicate, Advocate, Relate, and Educate. Pastor Brian is proposing forming a small task force to work on how we can take what we've learned from this book and develop some plans to turn these concepts into actions. We hope to wrap up our study in November and hope the task force will begin its work after the first of the year. If this is something that interests you, please speak to Pastor Brian.

We started the meeting with a brief service for All Saints' Day, remembering those connected to our congregation and others who have passed. The business portion of the meeting was brief, thanks to our competent committees who do so much work. Brian highlighted the excellent work of James, assisted by Dave and Rick, who accomplish so much each week. The latest addition to the kitchen is a new icemaker which James researched, purchased and installed with input from Buildings and Grounds. We also expressed our appreciation for Brian as he marks his first anniversary with First Pres!

Oh boy, look at the motley crew from the Oak Tree Learning Center's Trunk-or-Treat.





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

Presbytery of Riverside

Officeof the Stated Clerk
POBox1561, San Jacinto, CA92581
statedclerk@rivesidepresbytery.com
(909)881-1595 office

November 1, 2026

To the Session and Congregation of First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the Presbytery, I am writing to extend our warmest congratulations and blessings as you celebrate your one-year anniversary of ministry together with your pastor, the Reverend Dr. Brian Symonds. I recognize that the installation occurred later, but Pastor Brian's start occurred one year ago.

The first year of a new pastoral relationship is a season of foundational growth, mutual discovery, and the weaving together of shared hopes. Over the past twelve months, you have listened to one another, worshiped together, and begun the vital work of discerning where Christ is leading your congregation next. We give thanks for the dedication, energy, and faithfulness both the congregation and Pastor Brian have brought to this holy partnership.

A one-year milestone is not just a look backward at what has been accomplished, but a hopeful look forward. We pray that the trust, joy, and collaborative spirit planted in this first year will continue to grow deep roots. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide your shared ministry, strengthen your witness to the Gospel, and bless your community through your work together.

Please know that your sibling congregations and the leadership of the Presbytery stand with you in prayer and celebration. We look forward to seeing how God continues to move through your partnership in the years to come.

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." — Philippians 1:3-5 (NIV)

Grace and Peace,

The Reverend Paul Knopf
Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Riverside

First Presbyterian Church

November 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion Sunday  9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	2 3:30pm PW Coordinating Team	3 6:00am Election polling 9:00am Food Distribution 12:00pm Circle of Faith	4	5 9:00am Food Distribution	6 9:30am Kerygma	7 *9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse* 10:00am Straight Up AA
8 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Choir Practice	9 5:00pm Nurture Committee	10 9:00am Food Distribution 5:00pm Worship Committee	11 12:00pm Staff Meeting 1:00pm Stewardship Committee 7:00pm Mensch Group	12 9:00am Food Distribution 5:00pm Pastor's Book Club	13 9:30am Kerygma 6:00pm Movie Night (Nurture)	14 *9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse* 10:00am Straight Up AA 11:00am Frank Thomas Memorial Service
15 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Congregational Meeting 12:00pm Deacons	16	17 9:00am Food Distribution 1:00pm Buildings & Grounds Committee 1:00pm Circle of Grace and Hope 4:30pm Symphony Guild	18 First Press Deadline 5:15pm SESSION Dinner 6:00pm SESSION Meeting	19 9:00am Food Distribution 9:00am Friendship Circle	20 9:30am Kerygma *10:30am Food Bagging*	21 9:00am Deacon Food Distribution 10:00am Straight Up AA *1:00pm* *Symphonie Jeunesse*
22 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	23 7:00pm Circle of Kindness	24 9:00am Food Distribution 4:00pm Family Focus Center Thanksgiving Dinner	25	26 Church Office Closed. Thanksgiving Day	27 Church Office Closed 9:30am Kerygma	28 10:00am Straight Up AA
29 9:30am Adult Bible Study 10:30am Worship Service	30	1 9:00am Food Distribution 12:00pm Circle of Faith	2 12:00pm Staff Meeting	3 9:00am Food Distribution 5:00pm Longest Night Service	4 9:30am Kerygma	5 *9:00am Symphonie Jeunesse* 10:00am Straight Up AA

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

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

word search

November First Press

r e d d a l z d h a h o p e
i e c l b t c r m e j g c u
l n c s r e t t u g i a a a
i o t o r w e l l n e s s h
A d v e n t v f t p e w b i
r h a e r c d e a c o n s a
n l o a n n i v e r s a r y
t l w o e r s l r o o f i o
u T h a n k s g i v i n g o
f s a d a s o p s a l n i t
o g x i h m o f t t t s r n
o h p r e s b y t e r i a n
o r s l e e p r o t o c o l
e l o p n p c b d j y r u n

Advent
Thanksgiving
anniversary
beefaroni
cereal
deacons
gutters
hope
interns
joy
ladder
lasposadas
love
peace
presbyterian
protocol
reconciliation
roof
sleep
wellness

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.