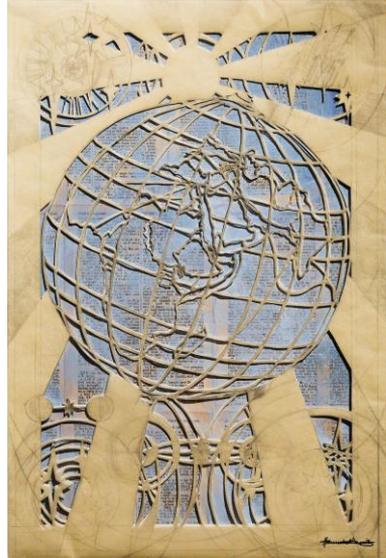
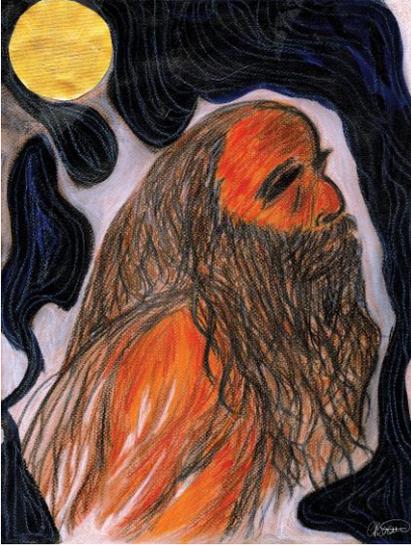


Second Sunday in Lent

February 1, 2026

10:30 a.m. Worship



“Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born anew.”
—*John 3:7*

First Presbyterian Church

Mailing address: P.O. Box 2729; San Bernardino, California 92406

909.882.3308

www.fpcsb.net

MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT: REV. BRIAN S. SYMONDS

MINISTRY OF PASTORAL SUPPORT: REV. DR. STEPHEN W. SMITH

MINISTRY OF VISITATION: LAURIE STAFFORD

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: CURTISS ALLEN, JR., DIRECTOR OF MUSIC;

WILLIAM ZEITLER, ORGANIST;

AMY GANO, BELLS

Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church

This service is being livestreamed and can be viewed on our YouTube channel in real time or as a recording. **Large-print copies of this order of service**, as well as **audio enhancement devices** are available **from the ushers**.

We gather on Sunday for 3 reasons:

- **To seek God**- whom we find in sacred text and sacrament, in music and in song, in prayer, in the beauty of this space, in the stillness where we can hear our hearts. We offer God our thanks and praise, our lament and longing, and our resources. We let go of burdens and receive grace and forgiveness. We see the One our hearts love.
- **To practice Community** – rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. To break bread with those whom we love and those whom we need to love more fully. We practice things our culture does not emphasize: resting, forgiving, sharing. Jesus asked us to love one another as he loved us, and we cannot do so without practice.
- **To listen for our Call**- often an invitation to go out and be or do or remember. God is speaking all the time: through conscience, nature, friends, and certainly scripture. We gather to listen for that Call and to recommit ourselves to discipleship.

Information on our common life can be found on our website www.fpcsb.net, along with sermons and newsletters. You can participate in our work by supporting us financially with a one-time or sustaining donation.

Children are **welcome** in worship.

OUR NEXT COMMUNION will be Thursday, April 2nd.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Stephanie Fletcher

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

“As a leader of the Jewish law, Nicodemus holds beliefs that no longer align with the kingdom of God that Jesus embodies. Jesus invites him to begin again, to learn a new way of knowing and living out his faith. In Genesis, God commands Abram and Sarai to leave everything – their home, their family, their land – to seek the land of Canaan and begin again. At 75 years old, Abram is called to start over, but through this new beginning, God creates a new family and a new nation.”

-Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE *A Prayer in the Still of the Night* W. Zeitler
Allow the music to usher you into sacred space and time.

INTROIT *Blest Be the Tie that Binds* Johann Georg Nageli
Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

What is it like to begin again?

- ✘ It is like flowers in the spring that push through frozen ground.
It is like babies learning to walk, one clumsy step at a time.
It is like Nicodemus in the night, asking Jesus for guidance.
It is like a Sunday morning, starting our week anew.

May we find God in our seeking.

- ✘ May we learn as we go.

May we be brave enough to begin again.

- ✘ Let us worship the God of new beginnings.

† The symbols you will see in this order of worship mean:

* Stand if you are able ✘ The congregation will read.

PRAYER of CONFESSION

One of the things I love about the prayer of confession is it offers us a new beginning. In the prayer of confession, we lay our cards on the table. We speak honestly with God about who we are and who we long to be. And in response, God wraps us in grace and lets us begin again. So together, with God’s grace, let us wipe the slate clean. Together, with God’s grace, let us pray the prayer of confession:

God of new life, you call us into unknown places,

✘ **and we bury our heads in the sand.**

You promise all the stars in the sky,

✘ **and we doubt it can be true.**

You speak of new life in the Spirit,

✘ **and we tell ourselves we’ve missed our chance.**

Over and over and over again, you invite us closer to you.

✘ **Show us the way. Forgive our mistakes. Give us the courage to begin again with you. Amen.**

Family of faith, hear and believe this good news: There is a grace to God’s love that is bigger than we can imagine. No matter what we did or didn’t do yesterday, we have been forgiven. Today, the slate is wiped clean. Today, we are made new.

Join me in saying:

✘ **We belong to God. We are held in God’s love. We are made new. Amen.**

(We stand and sing the Response)

*SUNG RESPONSE 205 *Live in Charity (Ubi Caritas)*¹

Berthier

**Ubi caritas et amor,
Ubi caritas Deus ibi est.**

**Live in charity and steadfast love.
Live in charity: God will dwell with you.**

TIME with the CHILDREN

[After Time with the Children, our children are encouraged to worship with us. There are activity bags and books in the Narthex.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

¹ Text: Taizé Community. Music: Jacques Berthier. ©1979 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, agent. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-7062545. All rights reserved.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 12:1-4a

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him.

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

This is the word of faith that we proclaim.

✘ **Thanks be to God.**

PRAYER for ILLUMINATION

Holy God, we come to you today with our biggest questions: Who are we called to be? What do you need from us? Where are you in our midst? How can we follow you more clearly? As we read your Word today, we ask that you would weave answers into the text. Speak to us through these ancient stories that we might find what we are seeking in you. With gratitude and open hearts we pray, amen.

SERMON

*Seeking:
How Do We Begin Again?*

Rev. Brian S. Symonds

ANTHEM

And Can It Be That I Should Gain?

Jim Taylor

And can it be that I should gain an int'rest in the Savior's blood? Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who Him to death pursued? *Amazing love! How can it be that Thou my God shouldst die for me?* He left His Father's throne above, So free, so infinite His grace; Emptied Himself of all but love, And bled for Adam's helpless race; 'Tis mercy all, immense and free; For, O my God, it found out me. *Amazing love! ...* 'Tis mystery all! Th'Immortal dies! Who can explore His strange design? In vain the firstborn seraph tries To sound the depths of love divine! 'Tis mercy all! let earth adore, Let angel minds inquire no more. Long my imprisoned spirit lay fastbound in sin and nature's night; Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth, and followed Thee. *Amazing love! ...* No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine! Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness divine, Bold I approach th'eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ my own. *Amazing love! ...* Amazing love, that Thou my God Shouldst die for me.

AFFIRMATION of FAITH

✘ **We believe in a God who meets us in the shadows, who welcomes our questions, who invites us to begin again. We believe that Jesus showed us a new way, a deeper faith, a more compassionate existence. We believe that all of our beginnings should return us to this foundation, and that no matter how many times we lose our way, God always welcomes us home. Amen.**

DEACONS' MINUTE for MISSION

Kyle Smith

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THE OFFERING of OUR TITHES and GIFTS

(We offer our tithes and gifts to be part of God's purposes in the world, and we invite you to take part. You may place your offering in the basket in front or give it to the usher. You may always send gifts by mail or online.)

OFFERTORY

***PRAYER OF THANKS**

God of grace, you provide for all our needs. Accept these offerings as signs of our gratitude and bless them to further Christ's ministry and mission among the poor, the despairing, and the destitute.

✠ **Amen.**

CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION to the LORD'S TABLE

Here, at this table, Christ is the host.

Those who wish to serve him must first be served by him,

Those who want to follow him must first be fed by him.

This is the table where Christ offers to make us new.

So come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, a better life, a fairer world. Come: it is Christ himself who invites you.

SURSUM CORDA

The Lord be with you.

✠ **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

✠ **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

✠ **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

GREAT PRAYER of THANKSGIVING

You, Holy One, came to us as a child in Bethlehem– and there was no room for you.

We pray for all for whom there is no home, no room. Deepen in us a desire to make room for them, and so make room for you.

God, in your mercy

✠ **Hear our prayer.**

You, our Lord, fled to Egypt as a refugee.

we pray for all who flee their homeland in fear, leaving behind all that is familiar.

Help us to welcome and support them; and know the meaning of

Welcome in a new way.

God, in your mercy

✘ **Hear our prayer.**

You, our Prince of Peace, call us to be peacemakers.

We pray for peace in our world. We pray especially at this time for
Ukraine and Venezuela and Nigeria

We pray for the leaders of the nations,
for those who have power to bring an end to violence and war-
God, in your mercy

✘ **Hear our prayer.**

You, who call us to be Church, we pray for our congregation and our
neighborhood.

Help us to show hospitality- knowing that in showing love and
respect to a member of your family, we are showing it to you.

God, in your mercy

✘ **Hear our prayer.**

With angels and saints and the company of heaven, we sing your
praise:

SANCTUS

James C. Huffstutler

✘ **Holy, holy, Lord Almighty, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Glory in the highest.
Blessed, blessed,
blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna,
Hosanna in the highest.**

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE, OUR LORD'S PRAYER

We pray for people who are sick in body or mind,
for those who are grieving//those who long for comfort
and especially for... [names]

In their need may they know your healing touch.

God, in your mercy

✘ **Hear our prayer.**

And now we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us

✘ **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever.
Amen.**

PRAYER of CONSECRATION

Spirit of the living God, present with us now,
breathe in us and on these your gifts of bread and wine,
that sharing your blessing and your broken life,
we may share in your presence and reality,
and together, as your body, remain in your love.

THE WORDS of INSTITUTION

Among friends gathered around a table,
Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying,
“This is my body which is given for you.
Do this to remember me.”

Later, after they’d eaten, he took a cup
and said, “This cup is our new relationship,
made possible by my life and death.
Whenever you drink it, remember me.”

Look, here is your Lord, coming to you in bread and cup.
The gifts of God for the people of God.

WE SHARE GOD’S GIFTS

(Communion will be served by intinction at two stations. As you feel ready, please come up the center aisle to a station, receive a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, eat it, and return to your seat by the side aisle. The cup is non-alcoholic. Gluten-free bread can be found at the station by the pulpit. There will be rovers to bring the elements to you if you do not wish to come forward. We sing as we commune.)

SUNG PRAYERS

As we go forward, as we wait and pray before & after, we sing our prayers together. The refrains are sung over & over as we make them our own.

SUNG REFRAIN 544 *Bless the Lord, My Soul*³ Jacques Berthier

Bless the Lord my soul, and bless God’s holy name

Bless the Lord my soul, who leads me into life...

³ Text & Music: Jacques Berthier/Taizé Community. ©1991 GIA/Taizé, Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, F-71250 Taizé Community. Reprinted by permission under ONELICENSE #A706254. All rights reserved.

SUNG REFRAIN 527 *Eat This Bread*⁴ Jacques Berthier

Eat this bread, drink this cup,
come to me and never be hungry
Eat this bread, drink this cup,
trust in me and you will not thirst

SUNG REFRAIN 294 *Within Our Darkest Night*⁵ Jacques Berthier

Within our darkest night,
you kindle the fire that never dies away, never dies away.
Within our darkest night,
you kindle the fire that never dies away, never dies away.

PRAYER after COMMUNION

✘ Here we have tasted your goodness and grace,
felt the nearness of your Spirit and the power of Community.
Help us to follow wherever you lead
And share the gifts we've been given. Amen.

***HYMN 483** *Dearest Jesus, We Are Here* LIEBSTER JESU

***MOMENT for REFLECTION**

***CHARGE and BENEDICTION**

***RESPONSE** *Blest Be the Tie that Binds* Johann Georg Nagëli
From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free; and perfect love and
friendship reign through all eternity.

POSTLUDE *Tempus Loquetur*

GREETERS: Mindy Rueda, Amy Rueda

USHERS: Katie Smith, Dave Thomas, *Lead Ushers*

Jim Siegmund, Al Rueda, *Security Ushers*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord, Brandon Turner

LIVESTREAM ENGINEER: James Welte

CAMERA OPERATORS: Kevin Lamb, Lynn Usher

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REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Ron & Ruby Kraft, Bob Saenz

Elders: Robin Edwards, John-Paul Fletcher, Jon Horstmann

Deacons: Dave Thomas, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda

This Weeks' Celebrations

Mar 2 Kristine French
Lynda Savage
Kurt Star

Mar 3 Teofila Rosemarie Fletcher
Asher Gano

Mar 5 Joyce Lyons

Mar 7 Kathy Showman

Seeking...and discovering. Our Lenten theme invites us to seek where God is being revealed in our lives. This could be in subtle and quiet revelations, or in loud and significant happenings. It could be something someone has done for or said to you, or something you offered another. It could be in beauty or in chaos. Take a moment before or following the worship service and find the giant map in the Narthex. Write on a post-it where God was revealed to you, and stick it on the map...anywhere. You could do this once or multiple times throughout Lent. The Worship Committee along with Pastor Brian may collect the post-its throughout the season to pray over them and to make room for more revelations. **Blessed discoveries.**

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***THANK YOU.*** To everyone who donated to help pay for Vincent's surgery, thank you. We are delighted to report that he returned to the church this week, but is considering becoming more of an indoor cat.

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LENTEN QUIET NIGHTS are planned to help us be faithful to the journey. In the contemplative space of the Fireside Room, we will share prayer, readings and silence centered around the theme:

God, Always Seeking Us.

WHERE: Fireside Room **TIME:** 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

DATES: THURSDAY EVENINGS: March 5, 12, 19, 26

Please enter the Fireside Room in silence.

SIMPLE SOUP SUPPER. Simple, and simply delicious, soup and bread suppers are offered following Quiet Night services.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Palm Saturday! On **Saturday, March 28th**, we will gather in Fireside Lounge at **9:00 a.m.** for a morning of fellowship and creation, to make palm crosses for Sunday. Everyone invited! No experience required! (Please bring your own scissors!) **At 10:00 a.m., we will prepare the sanctuary for Palm Sunday.** We invite you to join us!

Maundy Thursday Service, April 2nd. Before the joy of Easter, we must accompany Christ through Maundy Thursday. We invite you to come with us as we celebrate the Lord's Supper and welcome the mystery of the cross.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Thank you for your generous support of our food participants. Thank you for your generous donations of shelf-stable foods. A suggestion list is available at reception, and on our website. We encourage bargain shopping since all donations can be put to good use. **Currently we would especially appreciate pouches or pop-top cans of meat, fish, or fruit.**

Per Capita Apportionment. The annual Per Capita Offering for 2026 requires that we pay \$44 for each member of our congregation to our national organization. This amount is requested from you above and beyond your regular pledge offering.

Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian Church (please make a note on your check that the donation is for the Per Capita Offering). Thank you so much for being faithful stewards of our denomination!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Music Box

Elias had given thirty years to building the cathedral — so far.

In the beginning they had called him young, then promising, then gifted. He had a marvelous talent for rendering figures in stone so that they seemed almost to breathe. He arrived before dawn and left after dusk, carving saints whose faces caught the light in ways that made even the grizzled bishop fall silent, carving angels whose eyes seemed to rest in blessing on all who gazed upon her, her arms opened wide in welcome and love.

Around his neck he wore a small bronze medallion — his family crest. He came from a long line of stone masons; his ancestors had worn it when they pledged themselves to the craft. He had taken it off only once.

When she left him.

They had stood near the quarry road where the river could be heard but not seen. The spring thaw had swollen it; the sound ran thick beneath the earth.

“You can cut stone anywhere,” she had said. “I will not spend my life stuck in this town.”

He did not argue.

“You love stone more than me.”

After a long silence, he removed his medallion and placed it around her neck. “I’ll have another made, just like this one,” he said.

“We’ll be waiting for you.”

She left. He never saw her again.

Elias returned to the scaffolds the next day, and the day after that. Inwardly, a question tormented him: Was she right? Had he chosen stone instead of her? Years folded. The cathedral climbed.

He began a statue for the south portal — a woman holding a lamp, its flame sheltered in her palm. He could not seem to get her face right. It tightened too much, hardened; the mouth drew thin, almost reproachful.

A messenger came from a town upriver. A former apprentice — now master sculptor on his own great work — needed Elias’ help. Elias packed a small bag and set out, reaching the old inn at dusk.

When he signed the ledger, the innkeeper’s eyes fell on the medallion around his neck. “There was a woman who stayed here some years ago,” he said slowly. “She wore that very same crest.”

Elias’ breath caught.

“We got to talking. She was angry when she arrived. Spoke of a mason who would not leave his work. But before night fell, she changed her mind.” The innkeeper stirred the fire. “She said she had gotten it wrong. That he was not stubborn, but faithful. And she wanted that faithfulness for herself, too. She set out the next morning to return.”

A pause.

“The same morning the river took the bridge,” the innkeeper said quietly. “Many were lost. Maybe she was one of them.”

At the apprentice’s project, the troubled vault loomed overhead. From the ground it seemed to sag slightly at the crown, though the young master insisted the measures were exact.

“I’m sure they are,” said Elias.

He climbed the scaffold and stepped onto a narrow gallery above the nave. From there it was obvious. He gestured for the apprentice to join him. From that higher place the fault revealed itself — a supporting rib set slightly out of line.

“The arch wasn’t wrong,” the apprentice said.

“No,” Elias replied. “You were just standing in the wrong place to see it.”

When he returned to his own cathedral, he went back to the south portal. The woman with the lamp stood waiting, her mouth still holding that hint of severity he had wrestled with for weeks.

He stepped slightly to one side. The face altered in the shifting shadow; the firmness remained, the harshness fell away. He frowned — then, on impulse, turned the base a few degrees.

The light struck differently. The mouth steadied. The eyes softened without yielding. The lamp seemed almost to glow in her sheltering palm.

There. That was all it needed.

He paused a moment, closed his hand around his medallion, thinking of her.

Then he moved on to the next stone.

-- William Zeidler



The seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a symbolic statement of the church's heritage, identity, and mission in contemporary form. Its power depends on both its simplicity and complexity, as well as its traditional and enduring qualities.

The basic symbols in the seal are the cross, Scripture, the dove, and flames.

As a church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), our congregational life is governed by the Ruling Elders of our current Session:

Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis,
Pat Morris, Susan Skoglund, Katie Smith, Neal Williams,
Robin Edwards, John-Paul Fletcher, Jon Horstmann, Lynda Savage,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda,
Amy Gano, Rick Rodriguez, Jim Siegmund, Kyle Smith,
Rebecca Allen, Brent Nord, Dave Thomas, and Chris Wright-Thomas.