



FPC Press

SINCE 1909

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Turlock, California

May 2022

Published Monthly



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR'S HEART REV. DR. CRAIG J. WRIGHT

May Greetings, Church Family!

*“When the day of Pentecost came, they were **all together in one place.**” (Acts 2:1)*

I enjoy teaching and preaching through a book like Acts because it is so rich with history. It tells the stories of real people in real-life situations and how they were able to affect the world with the Gospel of Christ. From our vantage point as the readers of history, we can see God's hand directing the story, moving people and resources around to accomplish his goal of telling everyone in the world the good news of His love. But let us keep in mind that as easy as it is for us to look back and see what God was doing then, it was likely not very easy for them to see and understand. For instance, there are several times when God was moving his disciples to break down cultural walls that separated people from the church, and the church itself became the point of resistance. Their occasional resistance to what God was doing was not driven by a sense of disobedience to the call; rather, it was driven by fear of the unknown.

My favorite case in point was Peter. In Acts 10, he was caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place. It seemed that God was asking him to do something that he had always been taught was the wrong thing to do. Many of you will remember that Peter was Jewish, and a major defining part of the life of a Jew was the strict dietary restrictions placed on them by the law. Some foods were allowed, and they were considered clean, or kosher. However, all the others were considered unclean. Hey, think about it, who wants to eat unclean food?

One day, while Peter is praying, he had a vision in which a large sheet was lowered from the heavens, containing all the foods that Peter was not supposed to eat, all the unclean

stuff. You can imagine his response – he must have been thinking, ‘Oh, gross!’ And then the voice from heaven instructed Peter to go over and eat this stuff. If you want to imagine his dilemma, just open up a can of dog or cat food and pretend God just told you to eat it. Peter is stuck between the disgusting and the divine. His reply to God is priceless. He says, “By no means, Lord.” This happens two more times, with the same response from Peter, and then the sheet full of unclean food disappears. God then says to Peter, “What I have cleansed do not call unholy.”

Now we find ourselves in a bizarre, post-pandemic situation that is not so different from what I have been describing. Many rightly withdrew from public meetings like worship during the pandemic doing our part as good citizens to help bend the curve of covid infections downward. Most of us embraced a rapid onset germaphobia! Every surface from pews to hymnals, to fellow worshippers' hands, seemed unclean, covered with virus droplets, downright unkosher. In observing these societal laws of separation during the pandemic, perhaps some of us have grown comfortable with isolation, preferring to worship online, or perhaps not at all. If this is what is going on in your faith life, I want to cordially invite you back into your faith community. The worshipping body of Christ needs you and I think it is a good bet to say, you need us. We are not hugging and shaking hands yet, we are not passing the offering and communion plates right now, we are health conscious to be sure, but we are all in one space, in one accord, worshipping God together, just like they were in Acts. And that is a very good thing.

If it's been a while, we hope to see you soon!

Blessings,
Pastor Craig

THE LEARNING ZONE

would like to say

THANK YOU

to those that have taken time to tutor the children in our community, donate snacks, and have financially supported our tutoring ministry.

Our last day is Thursday, May 5th.
And we are very grateful for all your support and generosity.



GRADUATE RECOGNITION SUNDAY

On Sunday, June 5th, 2022, we will be recognizing all grade level graduates.

Please send names of your graduate (s) to the office by May 29th.

SUMMER Reading Program

June 8th -- July 13th

Tutors are greatly needed! For more information on becoming a tutor, please contact Stephanie Anderson or the church office. This is a great opportunity to get a feel for the program.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Kids' Worship every Sunday morning meeting in room 7. What did the disciples do after Jesus went back into Heaven? How did the church begin? Were there still miracles? How was the Holy Spirit involved? Come find out! Join us as we learn through memorization, lessons, crafts, games, and activities.

Youth
FUNWORKS
Trip
Sunday, June 5th
Contact Stephanie Anderson
For more details.

NOW IS



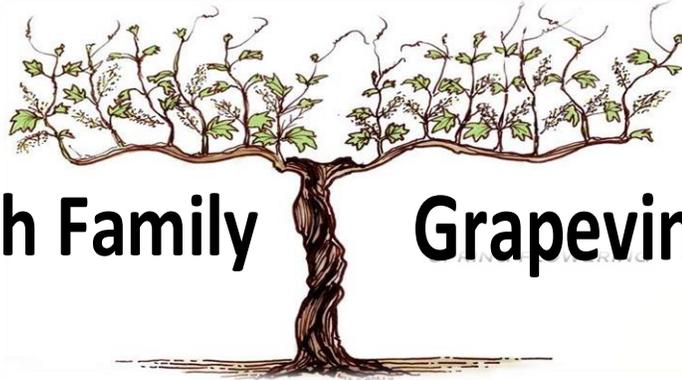
THE TIME!

Eight months down,
four to go!

Get those verses memorized!



Church Family Grapevine



Ongoing Prayer Needs Key Code:

P-Personal, **F**-Family, **G**-Grief, **H**-Health, **S**-Surgery, **PG**- Pregnancy, **E**-Employment, **ST**-Safe Travel, **A**-Adoption, **SA**-Salvation, **M**-Military

Avilla, Robby (S,H)
Blixt, Elizabeth (H)
Brugger, Betty (H)
Brunton, Bob (H)
McClellan, Barbara (H)
Peterson Family (G)
Reeves, Jean (H)
Runsten, Tricia (Darlene's Daughter) (H)
Sargis, Mabel (H)
Smith, Betty (H)
Taylor, Paul (H)
Vesperman, Dick (H)
Wiegman, Joyce (H)

—————
Please praise God continuously for who He is and what He has done in your life... as well as for your Church Family and Leadership Servants, Civic and National Leaders, Rescue, Recovery, and Relief workers.



Birthdays

May 2 Joyce Wiegman
May 3 Riley Wellman
May 11 Lauren Weisel
May 13 Sally Phillips
May 14 Vivien Huntley
May 17 Pat Hickman
May 19 D'vayne Conley-Gonzales
May 21 Jeannie Staley
May 27 Trevor Purdy
May 28 Bill Bishop

Anniversaries



If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.

First Presbyterian Church is a praying family.
Please let the church office know of your prayer needs and we will gladly add your name to our prayer chain.

NEED PRAYER?

We are here to pray for you.





BIG WEDNESDAY

Guatemala Fundraising

May 4th & 11th

Guest Chefs Prepare Gourmet Meals
ALL Proceeds Go to Meet the Needs
in Guatemala!

Wheelchair \$170 each

House \$3,200 each

Stove \$220 each

Triple Bunk Bed \$300 each

Food Bag \$50 each

Bathroom \$720 each

Wash Station \$85 each

PRAY. SUPPORT. GIVE | DRIVE-THRU PICK UP | 4:45 PM – 5:30 PM

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeking support for humanitarian response to Ukraine

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and World Mission working with partners to aid those impacted by war.



LEXINGTON, Kentucky — The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) launched an appeal Tuesday for funds to help support the Church's humanitarian response to the war started last week when Russia attacked Ukraine. Please give to bring support and aid to the families in need during this very catastrophic time. Please go to the link below and follow the simple instruction:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/presbyterian-church-u-s-a-seeking-support-for-humanitarian-response-to-ukraine/>



A Special Message from Our Pastor



Marcy and I are leaving soon on a trip to Guatemala both to do missions work and spend time at language school brushing on our Spanish. We are both convinced that becoming more fluent in Spanish will help us in ministry both in Turlock and abroad. We will not be traveling alone however, Nick will be going with us, Stephanie, Cameron and the boys, as well as Jeff and Julie Anderson, Cameron's parents. We will team up the first week with Ben & Emily and members of Bethel Ministries team to do a week of mission's work. We will build a house for a needy family, provide clothes, food, and other things. This is not a trip sponsored by the church. Rather it is paid for by the Andersons and the Wrights, as a family missions venture. This is the first time we have attempted such a thing and we are very excited to do it. Now did you know, before the pandemic, Bethel Ministries barely had any places for teams to stay during the year and do what we do. But when the pandemic set in their calendar shut down and now they are desperate for more teams to come and do this type of work. Which leads me to a question, how about you? Would you like to put a team together of friends or family members and take a week, to go and have a meaningful time in a beautiful country touching beautiful people with compassion? A private team does not have to be a big team. Three to ten people can pledge some funds, schedule flights, and team up with Bethel Ministries for a week or so of meaningful work. We will certainly let you know how it went for us, and just consider the seed planted in your heart. God bless you, Pastor Craig

Guatemala Mission Needs

"But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God." Acts 20:24

Meet the Guatemalan Families that are in desperate need of homes for a safe and adequate place to live. Please consider supporting our Guatemala mission this summer, during the week of July 4th – 11th. Prayerfully, we can help make their dreams come true.



Rosa Elena Pana is 42 years old and lives with her four children in Aldea Quixaj, San Pedro Carchá Sector 1. She was separated from her husband three years ago due to his infidelity. She has very low education level and can not read or write. Rosa washes clothes for a living earning \$4. She owns her own land and rents it out for planting corn and receives \$10 a year for income. The children's father only supports them by giving them \$25 two or three times a year. Their present house is built of scraps of metal and wood sticks. Their land doesn't have water or drainage. During the summer months, they walk about an hour to get water from the closest natural water source. They don't have a wash station or bathroom, only a latrine. Their land does have electricity and they only have two beds to sleep in, which are in very bad condition. The children are: Rudy Anibal (11) in fourth grade; Noé David (9) in second grade; Jesús Rafael (6) in pre-school; and Ángela Noemi at age three. After knowing their story, Bethel Ministry has chosen them as one of the families to be blessed with a new home that has a stove, a wash station and bunkbeds to accommodate the family for a safer and more protected place for them to live.



Elsa Panana Cucun (39) married to Jeremias Chú (36) live in Aldea Quixal, San Pedro Carchá Sector 1, Alta Verapaz. They have four children: Glendy Estefany (15) in fifth grade; Oldin Romeo (11) in fourth grade; Order Amilcar (7) in preschool; and Karina Esmeralda who is three years old. Elsa is a housekeeper, and she can only read or write at first grade level as so does her husband who works two or three times in the fields making an income of \$2-\$4 a day. Due to their low income, the family only eats two meals per day. They have made their one bed for the entire family to sleep on built from wooden boards and blankets. Their house is only one room made up of scrap metal and wood and is deteriorated. They do not have electricity, bathroom, water or even a well. During rainy seasons, they try to save as much water as possible for during the summer they have to walk an hour to carry water from the closest water source. They do fortunately own their own land which Elsa received as inheritance. Without a doubt, Elsa & Jeremias are doing their best to provide for their family. Yet, they are still in great need of a stove, bunkbeds, and a wash station so children can have a comfortable place to live.



Ofelia Tiul is 29 years old who lives with her three children and her 89-year-old bedridden mother who was badly injured in a motorcycle accident. They live in Aldea Quixaj, San Pedro Carchá. Ofelia sells fruit during the week where she earns \$4 a week to support her family and pay for their expenses and necessities. However, because of their low income, they have not been able to take her mother to a doctor. Ofelia's children are: Fernando Anibal (14) in eighth grade; Byron Gonzalo (10) in second grade; and Dulce Rebeca (6) in preschool. Ofelia owns her own land, and their house is built of scrap metal and is very deteriorated. They don't have electricity or drainage and water. Same as other families they save as much water as possible during rainy seasons, so they don't have to travel far in the summer months. They have a latrine and two beds in very poor conditions. They would love a home equipped with wood stove & bunkbeds for the children. Their dream is to have a better quality of life.



As part of our mission, we would like to provide a total of:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 50 Wheelchairs @ \$170 each | 3 Houses @ \$3,200 each | 3 Triple Bunkbeds @ \$300 each |
| 3 Stoves @ \$220 each | 3 Bathrooms @ \$720 each | 3 Wash Stations @ \$85 each |
| Food for 20 Families @ \$50 each | | |

Kindly make your donations to First Presbyterian Church and note the need that you'd like to meet in the memo. Thank you again for supporting this wonderful mission in bringing Christ to the less fortunate.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN BIBLE STUDY

PW Women's Bible Study meets on the third Wednesday morning of the month. Our next gathering will take place on Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 10:30 am in Voight Hall. There will be a Zoom link available for those that need that option. This month's lesson is the second of two lessons focusing on Mary. No biblical woman has captured the imagination of the faithful as thoroughly as Mary. As someone who understands the fears and grief of motherhood, she has been a sympathetic figure to women through the ages. Mary is also the model disciple for all followers of Jesus. She allowed God to work in her despite the risk and pointed others to faith in Jesus.

Our study comes from the 2021-22 PW/Horizons Bible Study: What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus authored by Merryl Blair. This Bible study provides a unique glimpse into the lives of the women intimately connected with Jesus and his life and ministry. We will study Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary. Introducing the 2022-23 PW/Horizons Bible Study: Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight authored by Carol M. Bechtel. This study begins in September 2022. In the nine lessons of this Bible study – with passages from Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Matthew, Luke, and Acts – we'll consider Sabbath: as a celebration, not a day of dreary formality; as God's intent for all of creation that includes busy women too; as one day of the week, perhaps a Sunday; as a time to surrender unhealthy striving and frantic busyness, and instead trust that God will provide; as a reminder that life is precious and working too much is against God's plans for our precious lives; as a day devoted to community and justice and not exclusively to self-care. Ultimately, Sabbath reminds us to honor God who honors us by giving us a day each week to reset our pace, our priorities, and our lives.

*For any questions or more information, please contact Candace Peterson. All women of the church are welcome to attend.
any questions or more information, please contact Candace Peterson.*

All women of the church are welcome to attend.

♪♪ Notes from the Music Room ♪♪

*Christ is Risen!
He is Risen, Indeed!
Alleluia! Amen!*

Then what?

I must admit that every year, after singing the Halleluiah Chorus (from the Messiah) at Easter, I feel a bit letdown. What is there left to sing? And so I plan ahead for the music we will sing for the week or two following Easter.

But how do I choose the music? Here are some of the criteria I use for selecting anthems for the choir:

1. How many singers? We are still rebuilding our choir since Covid is almost over. And then there are vacations and illnesses which mean not everyone is in town!
2. What vocal parts are represented in those present? Since Covid, we have not had as many men in the choir as we have had in the past. If you are a man and like to sing, or if you know of someone, please let them know we are looking for tenors and bases to augment our men's sections!
3. What style of music do we want to sing? We like to sing a variety of styles of music throughout a season, so we try to balance modern pieces, those oldies but goodies, some toe tappers and some contemplative. We also like to include music which uses other musical instruments.
4. And finally, what lyrics (texts) do we want to look for? This is the most important factor I look for. The text must, for me, lift up the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. How will the words of Jesus speak to us in our daily lives? How can we be more faithful followers of Jesus TODAY, and every day following? How can we show the love of God to others in our world?

So, let us not think, even for a minute, that the words, "CHRIST IS RISEN!" be the end of the story. It is only the beginning! Thanks be to God.

Rev. Wendy Warner,
Director of Music

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session last met on April 18, 2022.

Of interest:

- Approved receiving, with regret, the resignation of Elder Robby Avilla (Class of 2022).
- Approved reinstating after-worship hospitality which was restricted during Covid.
- Eggstravaganza was a success even with the threatening weather. Approximately fifty people participated. Thank you to all that volunteered!

On behalf of Session, thank you for your continuing support to the life and mission of FPC. God is good!

In His service,

Pat Wallace
Clerk of Session

DEACONS TEAM MINISTRY

We began our second Deacon meeting on Monday, April 11th with Bill Bishop's very moving devotion and prayer. We continued our meeting making sure communion responsibilities were covered for Easter communion services and into May. In an attempt to get to know each other better, we participated in a little icebreaker activity so that people would have to talk to someone they didn't know.

We congratulate our Easter card artist, 11-year-old Dani, on the beautiful design and color of the Easter cards we sent out. A huge thank you to her.

Again, we look forward to the remainder of the 2022 year and working together with you.

In Christ,
Darlene Runsten, Co-Moderator



FINANCE UPDATE

Income & Expense Year to Date
Ending March 31, 2022

Total Income	\$ 79,526.37
Total Expenses	\$ 88,732.15
Excess Expense	(\$ 9,347.49)

Thank you for your continued financial support of FPC. Just a reminder that our general fund contributions support the costs that keep our church running. We are grateful for all you do!

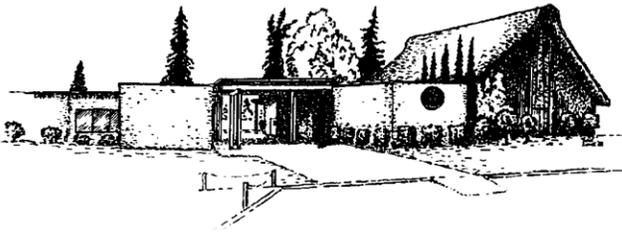
Thank you,
FPC Finance Committee

PER CAPITA

As a connectional church, our work is maintained and funded by a financial system called "Per Capita." In this system, each governing body above the local congregation's session determines how much it will cost to do what the Book of Order and the next higher governing council require. Each body also calculates what it will cost to do the ministries we believe God is calling us to do. And the General Assembly determines the cost of maintaining the structures and systems at the national level that support the internal work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its relationships with other faith communities around the world.

As members, we pay per capita, in addition to one's annual gift, recognizing that the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) is a connectional church and we are part of a larger family throughout the country. This connection includes our Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assembly. Our financial support keeps us connected and able to support the work and mission of our Presbytery and our sister churches. Our 2022 per capita apportionment of **\$26.74** per member supports our Presbytery office, Synod, and General Assembly. Thank you in advance for supporting the Presbytery ministries.





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Facebook:

www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurch



Big enough to meet your needs...Small enough to know your name.

Church Staff
Pastor: Rev. Dr. Craig Wright
Parish Associate: Rev. Wendy Warner
Children Ministry Director: Marcy Wright
Youth Ministry Director: Stephanie Anderson
Director of Music: Rev. Wendy Warner
Administrative Assistant: Polet Yonan
Bookkeeper: Kimberly Sasman
Accompanist: Dr. Wayne Kidwell
Organist: Barbara Bort
Nursery Attendant: Rebecca Staley

ELECTED DEACONS AND SESSION OFFICERS		
<u>Elders</u> <u>Class of 2022</u> Dan Hardesty Joey Reyes Adria Sanders Patricia Wallace	<u>Elders</u> <u>Class of 2023</u> Michael Betts Donna Harrison Candace Peterson John Sims	<u>Elders</u> <u>Class of 2024</u> Mark Aldax Kathleen Gunn Marilyn Hoobyar Priscilla Peters
<u>Deacons</u> <u>Class of 2022</u> Diane Arakelian Lynette Betts Valerie Keesey Elaine Neely Pat Rubalcava Darlene Runsten Lisa Wellman	<u>Deacons</u> <u>Class of 2023</u> Alison Aldax Niki Higdon Marlana Mizicko Jana Purdy Kendra Reyes Cyndi Sims Jeannie Staley	<u>Deacons</u> <u>Class of 2024</u> Bill Bishop Amber Gonzales Donna Lansing Nancy Seaver Meghan Young Brent Harrison