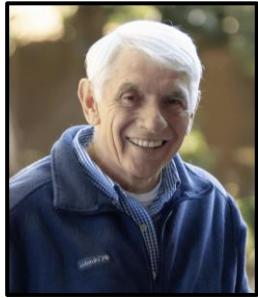


FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
EST. 1909

First Press

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TURLOCK, CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 2026



A little while back I came across an interesting quote. It is from Mahatma Gandhi. He seemed to appreciate the Bible and said this about it. "You Christians look after a document containing enough dynamite to blow all civilization to pieces, turn the world upside down and bring peace to a battle-torn planet. But you treat it as though it is nothing more than a piece of literature."

This quote can make us wonder, why so many followers of Christ don't see the Bible as a dynamite book. For many it is just a nice book of literature; much like Moby Dick, To Kill a Mocking Bird, the Brothers Karamazov, Go Tell it on the Mountain, Harry Potter, Little Women, The Hobbit, etc. The Bible does have great literature in it, but that is not the purpose of the Bible. Its purpose is to draw us to Jesus Christ.

For many the light has gone out of their study to the Bible. We feel it is dull. Or we can't figure out exactly what the Scripture means. It seems out of date and old. For some it is just that the claims of the Bible are too far out: creation in 7 days, walking on water, a worldwide flood, etc. In some circles today, the Bible is even being considered harmful or dangerous.

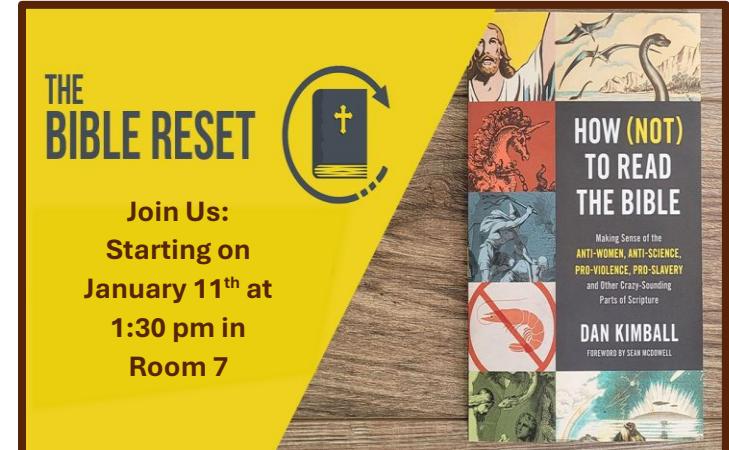
On Sunday, January 11th, we will start a new Bible study. It will be a class based on Rev. Dan Kimball's book, "How (Not) To Read the Bible." The subtitle of this book says, "Making sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery, and other crazy sounding Parts of

Scripture." It is a good book and I hope we have a good class.

Many of us just need a reboot on how we study the Bible. It is not a magical book. It is not a science book. It is not a book about history. In fact, it is not a book at all, it is a library of books. Sixty-six books in all. Come learn a little bit about this powerful book. God wrote it for us, maybe we should check it out. Why not make getting serious with the Bible your New Year's resolution. Happy New Years and thanks for letting me be your interim pastor.

Many Blessings,

Pastor Rick



Special Events

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

JANUARY 25, 2026

11:00 AM

Our business will include the election of officers, evaluation and review of our finances and celebrating the achievements of all our ministries in 2025!

We will also review the 2026 budget and electing a nominating committee for the upcoming year. Join us afterwards for a great time of POTLUCK FELLOWSHIP!

2ndFRIDAYS Fellowship

Below are some pictures of the 2nd Friday Fellowship gathering at the Purdy's home for Christmas. There will not be a January gathering. However, if you'd like to host the February gathering, kindly contact Cyndi Sims or the church office.



all church

Potluck

Sunday, January 25th

JOIN US FOR FOOD & FELLOWSHIP

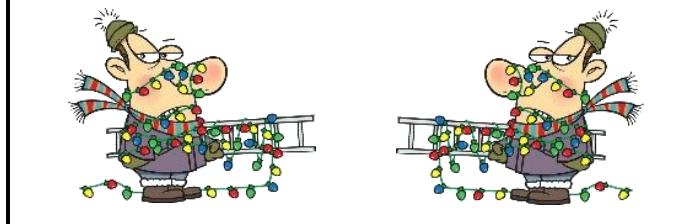


Please bring your favorite casserole or side dish or dessert to the kitchen prior to the service.



CHRISTMAS DE-GREENING

Let's have fun together in taking down our Christmas Decorations in the sanctuary and the Narthex! Please join us on **Sunday, January 11th at 11:00 am** immediately following our worship service. Lunch will be provided to all the participants by the Fellowship Committee.



Music & Tutoring Ministries



♫ Notes from the Music Room ♫

I have been filing away the Christmas choir anthems, the handbell music, and all the stacks of Christmas carols. Along with each piece is a memory of wonderful performances from my talented and faithful group of musicians. They are a blessing to me and to our church family! December-Advent-Christmas is a busy time of rehearsals in the music department. **But it is more so a time of great anticipation and joy as each piece of music is perfected and presented; and all with a great time of fellowship and prayer happening between us.**

Added to our Sunday worship was our first ever “Community Carol Sing!” The FPC music ministry presented a festive community event on December 12th which was so much fun! We were very pleased that everything came together, (no rain and outside in 45 degree weather) and with our only dress rehearsal at 5:30 pm that evening! I want to say a huge THANK YOU to all who helped make the event a reality: Adria Sanders, Alexis Green, Shasta Gunn, Haley Storms, the entire youth group, Robert England, Dan Hardesty, Wade Fullmer, Cliff Petersen, Kim Sasman, Kathleen Gunn, and all the musicians and all of the tear-down or clean up crew! The Carol Sing was a happy success, and it will return next December.

Opening my new calendar to 2026, it is a clean slate; but I look forward to planning, preparing, and presenting our Sunday worship music and special events to “Sing to Him a New Song”.

Serving in song,
Marilyn Fullmer
Music Director



The Learning Zone Tutoring Program

Our tutoring program had a successful 2025 and we are looking forward to 2026 with great anticipation. We look forward to continuing to expand our program this year. Several Turlock School District teachers are beginning to recommend our program to the parents of struggling students. Our banner in front of the church has been a great way to let our neighbors know that our program is available. Unfortunately, the recent storm damaged our banner. Stay tuned for a new improved banner!

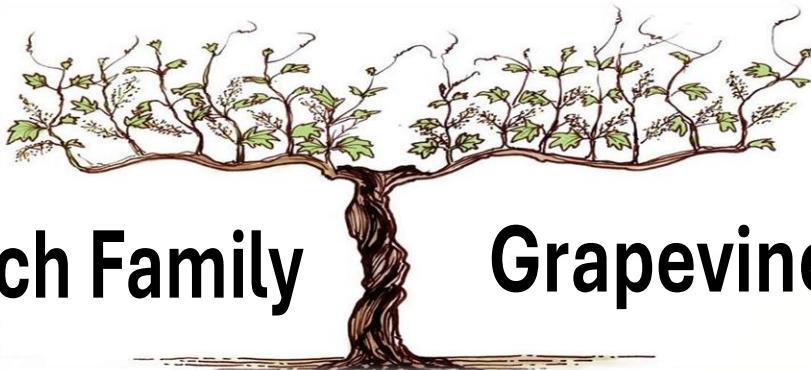
Parents are excited about our program, and we are always thrilled to hear that our students look forward to coming each week. Building relationships is an important part of tutoring. Our goal is for each student to have a one-on-one session with the same tutor each week. So far, we have been able to do that. As we grow, we will need more tutors. I have been in contact with the Turlock High School Key Club and some high school seniors will begin tutoring. I will be providing training for them.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for our program.

In Christ,

Terri Rodger

Prayers & Praises



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

Bishop, Emily (H)
Blixt, Elizabeth (H)
Callahan, Julie (H)
Hickman, Pat (H)
Lanchester, Irene (H)
Lowe, Marge (H)
Mirza, Julius (Jay) (H)
Runsten, Tricia (Darlene's Daughter) (H)
Taylor, Paul (H)
Vesperman, Richard (H)
Warfield, Sonia (H)

*Please praise God continuously for who He is and what He has done in your life...
Blessed is His Holy Name.*



Birthdays

Jan 7th Heather Gordon
Jan 9th Delores Haug
Jan. 10 Darcel Sanders
Jan 11 Noelle Hazelton
Jan 14 Caleb Staley
Jan 18 Lorna Schmidt
Jan 20 Sheila Josh
Jan 21 Pat Wallace
Jan 24 Cyndi Sims
Jan 31 Martin Purdy

Anniversaries

Jan 16 John & Cyndi Sims

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



JANUARY 2026

Communion Team – January

Darlene Runsten, Kim Sasman {Deacons}
Kathleen Gunn, Dave Posluch {Elders}

Worship Assistants

January 4th Kathleen Gunn
January 11th Dave Posluch
January 18th Pat Wallace
January 25th Susan England



SUNDAY GREETERS FOR JANUARY

January 4th Robby Avilla & Pat Rubalcava
January 11th Donna Lansing & Lorna Schmidt
January 18th Michael & Lynette Betts & Family
January 25th Bill Bishop & Nancy Seaver

Session & Finance Ministries

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session last met on December 15, 2025.

Of interest:

- Session approved John Sims to serve communion pending Presbytery approval at their February meeting. John completed communion training in early December.
- This fall, the Clerk of Session with an assist from Polet Yonan, conducted a membership roll review. This has not been done in ten plus years. We were able to trim more than 100 inactive members from our membership roll. We are indeed a much smaller church in numbers than we thought, yet we are still strong and mighty.
- A reminder that the annual Congregational Meeting will be held immediately after worship on Sunday, January 25, 2026.

On behalf of Session, we appreciate your continuing support of the ministries and activities of First Presbyterian Church. Please keep your Pastor Nominating Committee and your Session in your prayers as we discern on your behalf.

In His Service,

Pat Wallace
Clerk of Session



STEWARDSHIP

Managing God's Gifts To Us

FINANCE UPDATES

Income/Expense Report for November 2025

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| November Contributions: | \$ 30,788.00 | YTD Contributions: | \$ 237,568.49 |
| <u>November Other Income</u> | <u>\$ 1,337.37</u> | <u>YTD Other Income</u> | <u>\$ 38,735.02</u> |
| <u>November Expenses</u> | <u>\$ (23,222.99)</u> | <u>YTD Expenses</u> | <u>\$ (261,304.39)</u> |
| Difference: | \$ 8,902.38 | Difference: | \$ 14,999.12 |



Dear church family,

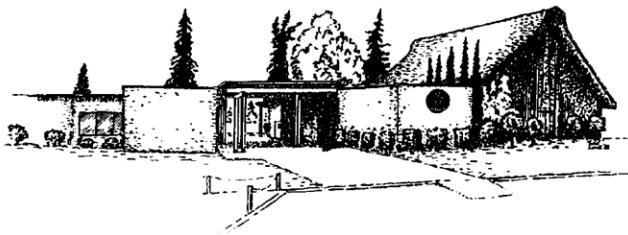
Thank you all for your generous contributions throughout this last year. As you can see above, we have had a good year. And we simply could not have done any of what we do without your continued support and prayers. On behalf of your finance committee and session, we are grateful for your faithful giving and supporting all the ministries of First Presbyterian Church and we look forward to next year as we discern God's will for our church and fulfilling His vision for our ministries as we serve others and one another.

May you all have a wonderful New Year's and may you continue to feel God's bountiful blessings in your daily lives.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. – Luke 6:38

In His Mercy & Grace,

FPC Administration Committee



First Presbyterian Church
2619 N. Berkeley Avenue
Turlock, CA 95382



Phone # (209) 202-3977
E-mail: fpcturlock@att.net
Website: www.fpcturlock.com

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurch

To Know Christ and
Make Him Known



Church Staff

Interim Pastor: Rev. Rick Lemberg
Music Director: Marilyn Fullmer
Administrative Assistant: Polet Yonan
Bookkeeper: Kim Sasman
Youth Director: Alexis Green
Assist. Youth Director: Shasta Gunn
Tutoring Director: Terri Rodger
Organist: Barbara Bort
Janitor: Michael Morris

ELECTED DEACONS AND SESSION OFFICERS

Elders
Class of 2025
Dan Hardesty
Adria Sanders
Pat Wallace

Elders
Class of 2026
Michael Betts
Susie England
Donna Harrison
David Posluch

Elders
Class of 2027
Kathleen Gunn
Candace Peterson
Dean Sasman

Deacons
Class of 2025
Diane Arakelian
Bill Bishop
Niki Higdon
Jana Purdy

Deacons
Class of 2026
Lynn Posluch
Kim Sasman
Lorna Schmidt

Deacons
Class of 2027
Jo Coffman
Heather Gordon
Donna Lansing
Darlene Runsten
Nancy Seaver
Heidi Shearer