

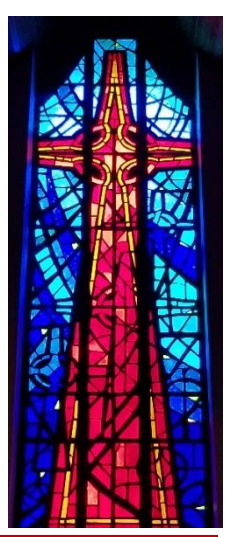


FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

First Press

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TURLOCK

EST. 1909



FEBRUARY 2024



Grace and peace to you,

As we move further into the New Year, I'd like to share something I came across while looking at the website for the Presbyterian Foundation, an organization

invested in the financial wellbeing of congregations and their members. The Foundation helps with capital campaigns and the management of resources. They also help churches with planning and casting vision, particularly when they are in transition.

In my recent tour of the Presbyterian Foundation website, I read a featured article by the Rev. Shannon White, in which she told a story of her young adult daughter's decision to enter the Peace Corps. The article makes use of the adage, "Let go and let God", a teaching used in twelve step recovery groups where participants are encouraged to allow God's wisdom more sway in the management of their lives.

In the case of Pastor White, the counsel to "Let go and let God" came from a friend who could see she was stressed and grieving as her daughter was headed for a 27-month assignment in Namibia, just north of South Africa on the Atlantic coast. In her mind, Pastor White believed in the work her daughter would do, teaching life skills, gender equality and AIDS awareness to people ages 9 to 24. Furthermore, she understood it was time for her daughter (a 2021 college graduate who had been living at home during the pandemic) to venture forth; but her heart was hurting as she experienced something akin to the pain she had felt when her daughter first left home for college.

Pastor White comforted herself by reflecting on the challenges and uncertainties that confronted heroes of the faith. She thought of Abraham and Sarah, of Moses and the Hebrew people, but not only was she worried about what lay ahead for her daughter, she was grieving the loss of her daughter's presence for a second time. The renewed sense of loss was compounded further by the Peace Corps guideline of a three-month silence between new volunteers and their families. This is to help volunteers with the process of separation from the familiar and adjustment to a new set of challenges in a distant place.

So I think of you, my new friends here in Turlock. I think of Pastor Craig Wright, too. Into the future we all go, carrying a mixed bag of feelings, those of loss and fear, as well as ones of hope and possibility. We go knowing that the Holy Spirit is an abiding source of guidance; and we venture with Jesus' promise to be with us. Those words of promise are in fact the last line in the Gospel of Matthew. I hope you don't tire of me citing them.

"I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

By the way, Pastor White concluded her article by mentioning a four-word message from her daughter that simply said, "Made it to Namibia."

Peace be with you,

Pastor Steve Smith



2024 Congregational Meeting Results

We convened our annual congregational meeting on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024, following our worship time. All officers, elders, and deacons, nominated and presented by the 2023 Nominating Committee for either two or three-year term, were voted in by the congregation. They shall be installed and/or ordained on **Sunday, February 11, 2024**, during our worship service at 10 am.

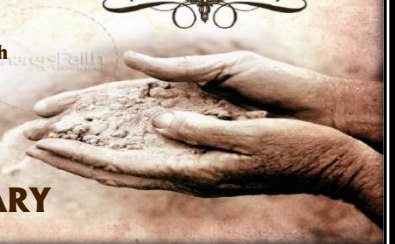
- DEACONS: Diane Arakelian, Lynn Posluch, Kim Sasman, and Jane Steckling
- ELDERS: Michael Betts, Susan England, Donna Harrison, and Dave Posluch
- The 2023 budget was reviewed and the 2024 budget was presented.
- Elected new corporate officers for 2024: John Sims (President), Patricia Wallace (Secretary), and Jerel Steckling (Treasurer).

JOIN US FOR A
SPECIAL SERVICE

ASH
WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 14th
AT 6:00 PM

IN THE SANCTUARY



WE ARE BACK!

Wednesday
— NIGHT —
DINNERS
Food • Family • Fellowship

FEBRUARY 28th • 5-6pm

We NEED volunteers to help with Preparing, Serving, & cleaning on monthly basis. Please contact the church office if you'd like to help. Thank you in advance for your serving heart.

2nd FRIDAYS
Fellowship

TEN PIN
FunCenter

JOIN IN THE FUN & COME FOR A NICE DINNER OUT AT THE TEN PIN RESTAURANT AND POSSIBLY A FUN GAME OF BOWLING WITH FRIENDS.

WHEN: FEBRUARY 9TH
TIME: 6:00 PM
RSVP: DAVE & LYNN POSLUCH
ASAP

PER CAPITA

Every year our congregation, along with all the other churches in our denomination, supports the mission efforts of our Synod and General Assembly. These are missions which are larger than we as a single church can manage, such as missionaries to other countries and ecumenical efforts around the world.

In addition, each congregation pays a Per Capita amount to support the administrative costs of our Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. This year our Per Capita cost is **\$30** per member.

If you are able to pay your Per Capita amount, please indicate that on your check or envelope.

Thank you,
Your Finance Committee



You are invited to Sacred Encounters with Jesus, this year's Bible Study from Presbyterian Women (PW). PW will meet as usual on the third Wednesday, February 21, at 10:30 in Voight Hall. This month, we discuss Lesson 5, "A Person with Leprosy Encounters Jesus," based on Luke 17:11-21. In this lesson's sacred encounter, an outcast Samaritan helps us recognize healing of the entire person as well as practices that poison relationships and harm our sense of community. We are challenged to have faith in the miracle of Jesus healing a person with leprosy, as well as healing customs that limit life and isolate those seen as outcast.

All are welcome, whether or not you have read the material, even if you're just curious, (especially) if you have never attended before. For questions or more information, please contact Candace Peterson.

♪♪ Notes from the Music Room ♪♪

Praise the Lord!

Sing to the Lord a New Song!

Psalm 149:1

In this New Year it is time to sing a New Song! But what does it take to sing a NEW song?

A new tune must tug at one's heartstrings. There is one song I have heard which has been pulling on my heart for several years, but the tune alone does not make it a good song. I must find the lyrics which will help the song flow.

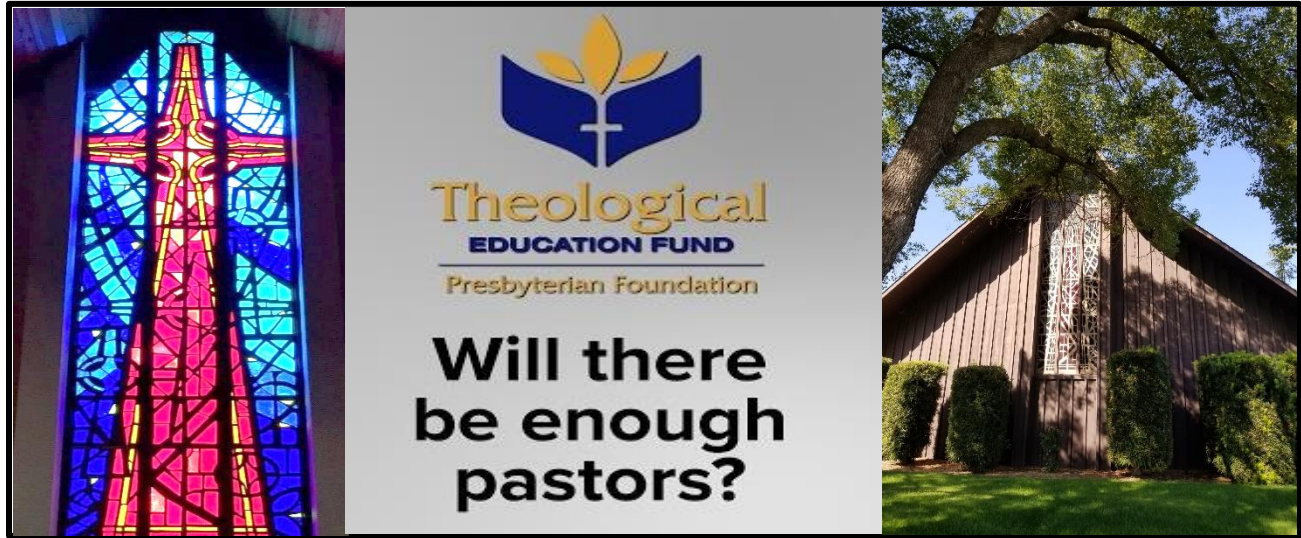
The rhythm must also help carry the tune. It might be jazzy, but a waltz tune would be better. Or a march could carry the tune with more force. Or perhaps a slow, lyrical rhythm would do it more justice.

And then there is the instrumentation. What instruments would sound the best with this piece of music? Piano, organ, Violin, flute, string quartet, or a small brass ensemble? And who is available to play to accompany voices! And when are they available? Soon? And how many voices are required to present this piece of music with the power needed to convey this message of God's amazing love to the people assembled to hear it?

This last month I had a dear friend drop a NEW song in my lap! It was magnificent – and the choir has already performed it! It is called 'Shelter Me' by the composer Lippencott – and I have received many compliments about it!

So stay tuned! I hope you will hear more New Songs this year!

Rev. Wendy Warner
Director of Music



Theological Education Fund Special Offering on Sunday, February 11th

On Sunday, February 11th we will be receiving our “Let Abe Do It” special offering in support of the PCUSA’s Theological Education Fund. For centuries, we Presbyterians have prided ourselves on an educated clergy, and that preparation is especially top of mind for FPC as we begin the process of seeking a new pastor.

The Theological Education Fund, which is managed by The Presbyterian Foundation, combines gifts from Presbyterians nationwide to support students attending Presbyterian seminaries (there are 10 plus two theological institutions related to our denomination by covenant agreement) located throughout the U.S. Research shows that Presbyterian seminary graduates have less debt than their peers at other seminaries, giving them more flexibility to follow the call of God, no matter where it might lead them.

We need our seminaries to be able to continue educating and “equipping the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12.) Research reveals that of clergy currently serving PCUSA congregations, 85% are likely to retire in the next decade, increasing competition for qualified candidates. Research also reveals that 91% of Presbyterian seminary graduates are employed within one year in the fields they’ve been called to serve.

This is where Abe comes in—the one whose image appears on the five-dollar bill. We’ll be passing the hat during worship on Sunday, February 11th, and we invite you to drop a “Lincoln” (or more if you are able!) in the hat. Whatever you choose to contribute, please know that every gift helps. Supporting the Theological Education Fund is one way we can do our part to help ensure that every church is able to call a seminary-trained pastor.



The Slow Work of God



Cedar Lodge

WOMEN'S RETREAT 2024
CALVIN CREST CONFERENCES

APRIL 26 – 28, 2024

You are invited to a beautiful weekend of inspirational worship and learning, rest, and recreational activities to replenish your souls.

Our speaker for the weekend is Rev. Kate Wallace Nunneley, who provides pastoral leadership in the areas of adult ministry, discipleship, and missions.

Kate is the co-founder of the Junia Project, a ministry that promotes biblical teaching about the partnership between men and women.

Two Nights Lodging; Five Delicious Meals:
Cedar Lodge \$260; Mountain View Cabin \$210
There is Scholarship Funds available at our church to help with finances for those who are interested.

REGISTER @ WWW.CALVINCREST.COM



Mountain View cabins



Calvin Crest Admin



Rev. Kate Wallace Nunneley

YOUTH SUPER BOWL PARTY



February 11th

Kick-off @ 3:30pm

Bring a Snack to Share

Contact Stephanie Anderson for
More Information



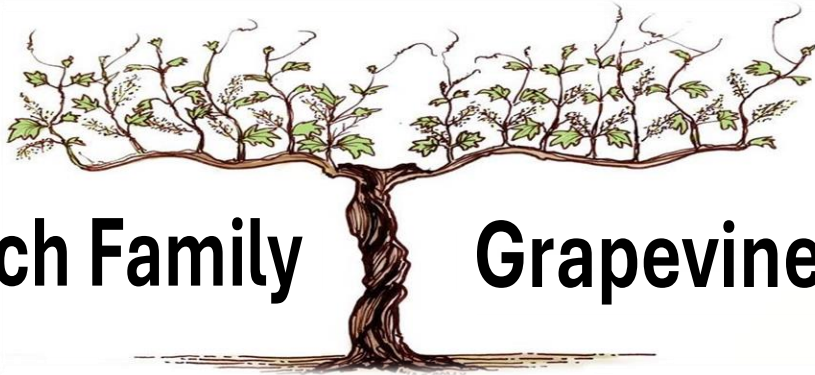
As we begin the new year, we want to say THANK YOU to the men and women that have chosen to take time out of their busy lives to tutor a child.

The children cherish the one-on-one time they have at The Learning Zone Center.

THANK YOU

To help make a bigger impact, we do need several substitute tutors, especially to help foreign students with ESL, and continuous healthy individual snacks to provide our students during teaching time. We are very grateful for your support and prayers.





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

Blixt, Elizabeth (H)
Brugger, Betty (H)
Callahan, Julie(H)
Lowe, Marge (H)
Marsh, Lois (H)
Meiselman, Sophie (H)
Narita, Leona (H)
Neely, Dale (H)
Reeves, Jean (H)
Runsten, Tricia (Darlene's Daughter) (H)
Seaver, Nancy & Family (G)
Taylor, Paul (H)
Ulrich, SaraLee (H)
Wallace, Pat (H)
Vesperman, Richard (H)

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



Birthdays

Feb 3 Tristan Sanders
Feb 8 Donovan Wallace
Feb 9 Marilyn Hoobyar
Feb 9 Maxine Kisling
Feb 11 Michael Sims
Feb 13 Emily Yonan
Feb 14 Mark Aldax
Feb 17 Melba Jones
Feb 19 Deryn Betts
Feb 19 Chris Wiegman
Feb 21 Alison Aldax
Feb 21 Robby Avilla
Feb 22 Dave Posluch
Feb 22 Dick Vesperman
Feb 23 Pat Weisel
Feb 24 Rebecca Staley
Feb 25 Adria Sanders
Feb 28 Natalie Staley

Anniversaries

Feb 1 Daniel & Amber Gonzales
Feb 15 Michael & Polet Yonan

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

Thank you, God

For your grace.
For your mercy.
For your forgiveness.
For your protection.
For your guidance.
For your friendship.
For your peace.
For your unfailing love.
For being my savior.

Amen



A Grateful Heart



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session last met on January 16, 2024.

Of interest:

- Approved the Special Offerings for 2024: Let Abe Do It-Theological Education Fund (February 11), One Great Hour of Sharing (March 24), Peace and Global Witness (October 6), Christmas Joy Offering (December 15 and 22).
- Approved the appointment of Candace Peterson as the Sunday School Superintendent. This is a volunteer position.
- Approved up to \$8,500 of tree work across the campus, some of which are safety concerns.
- Adopted the Donation and Gift Acceptance Policy.
- Approved the Transitional Pastor Employment Agreement (Amendment #1) which reflects increases in Presbytery salary minimums, an increase in reimbursable mileage, and a change in the IRS allowable mileage rate, effective January 1, 2024
- Approved revisions to the Bylaws of First Presbyterian Church. This will be on the agenda of the Congregational Meeting of January 28, 2024, for congregational approval.
- Approved that the front office will take steps to put the monthly newsletter online and to provide accommodation by mail and hard-copy pick-up.

Lastly, Session approved Priscilla Peters as Clerk Pro Term/Recording Clerk effective immediately through April 30, 2024, while I, the Clerk of Session, is on medical leave. On a personal note, I was diagnosed in early January with Stage 1 breast cancer. I will be having a lumpectomy on February 2, followed by radiation treatments. I would appreciate your thoughts and prayers for my family and I as we navigate through this. I would also appreciate your support with cards, texts, and emails. Please, no home visits.

On behalf of Session, thank you for your continuing support of the mission and ministries of First Presbyterian Church.

In His service,

Pat Wallace
Clerk of Session

DEACON MINISTRY

Deacons met on Sunday, January 14th at 11:15 a.m. after the church service. Since we did not meet in December, there was some business to complete. Communion assignments were made and a report followed on the success of the Tidings of Comfort dinner and also the 18 adorable blankets that were cut and tied as part of the Mission Faire. Jana Purdy reported on the occasion of actually giving the gifts collected by Mission Faire and the blankets to the kids and how excited the kids were to get everything. What a superb event! We discussed the possibility of purchasing the fleece for the blankets as it goes on sale throughout the year instead of purchasing it at the last minute in December.

This was the last meeting for the Deacon Class of 2023. Those Deacons going off are Alison Aldax, Marlana Mizicko, Kendra Reyes, Darlene Runsten, Cyndi Sims, Lisa Wellman, and Jeannie Staley. A HUGE thank you to those Deacons! We celebrated by having a few edible treats and then took a field trip to the new tablecloth storage Room 4.

The next Deacon meeting will be held on Sunday, February 11th at 11:15 a.m. following the church service. This will be the first meeting for the newly installed Deacons, and election for officers will take place. We are sad to see the Class of 2023 leave, but we are looking forward to the new Deacon class.

In Christ,

Darlene Runsten, Moderator

FINANCE UPDATE

January through December 2023

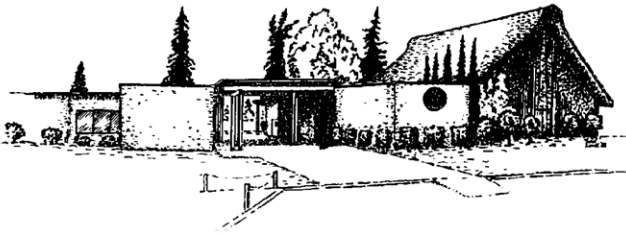
Contributions:	\$270,574
Other Income:	\$50,935
Total Income:	\$321,509
Expenses:	\$289,809
Excess Income:	\$31,700

Transfers from Operating Reserves (savings): \$25,000

What a wonderful financial finish to 2023. There were many changes that occurred in 2023 and our staff, leadership and congregation performed exceptionally to meet the challenges our church faced. While our year-to-date income was 13% lower than anticipated, total expenses were 27% below budgeted forecast resulting in excess income noted above. We are very thankful for our tenured and excellent staff members and grateful to our congregation for continued financial support. Looking forward to 2024.

In His Blessings,

Mark Aldax, elder



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E-mail: fpcturlock@att.net
Website: www.fpturlock.com

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurch
Worship Service at 10AM



To Know Christ and
 Make Him Known



Church Staff

Interim Pastor: Rev. Dr. Steve Smith
 Youth Ministry Director: Stephanie Anderson
 Director of Music: Rev. Wendy Warner
 Administrative Assistant: Polet Yonan
 Bookkeeper: Kim Sasman
 Tutoring Coordinator: Stephanie Anderson
 Organist: Barbara Bort
 Pianist: Dr. Wayne Kidwell
 Childcare: Rebecca Staley
 Janitor: Michael Morris

ELECTED DEACONS AND SESSION OFFICERS

<u>Elders</u> <u>Class of 2023</u>	<u>Elders</u> <u>Class of 2024</u>	<u>Elders</u> <u>Class of 2025</u>
Michael Betts Donna Harrison Candace Peterson John Sims	Mark Aldax Kathleen Gunn Marilyn Hoobyar Priscilla Peters	Dan Hardesty Adria Sanders Jerel Steckling Pat Wallace
<u>Deacons</u> <u>Class of 2023</u>	<u>Deacons</u> <u>Class of 2024</u>	<u>Deacons</u> <u>Class of 2025</u>
Alison Aldax Marlena Mizicko Kendra Reyes Darlene Runsten Cyndi Sims Lisa Wellman	Brent Harrison Donna Lansing Elaine Neely Pat Rubalcava Nancy Seaver Meghan Young	Bill Bishop Niki Higdon Jana Purdy Jeannie Staley