



FPC Press

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THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Turlock, California

December 2022

Published Monthly



A Message From Our Pastor's Heart Rev. Dr. Craig J. Wright

Holiday Greetings,

Some of you have heard this before. That does not make it redundant: it just makes you lucky for hearing again. This is timely for the Advent season. Last Wednesday many of us gathered for the annual service hosted by our deacons. The service is called, "Tidings of Comfort." It is always a wonderful time to reflect and remember. Tears and smiles and hugs and candles always make a meaningful combination.

For the bulletin, Polet asked me if it was "Tidings of Comfort and Joy" or "Tidings of Comfort and Hope." I said it was just "Tidings of comfort" but I missed the point by leaving off the word 'joy' or 'hope.' 'Tidings of Comfort' is taken from the song *God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman*. This medieval Christmas carol has been unintentionally turned upside down by the change in word meanings from the 1500s to today. Did you know, the words "rest" and "merry" had a much different spin 500 years ago? "Rest" was used to mean "make" or "cause" while "merry" meant "strength" or "power". The medieval Christmas hymn correctly interpreted translates, "God make (not rest) you strong (not merry) gentlemen, let nothing you dismay" and not "God give you rest, you folks who are having too much fun, you merry-makers and revelers." The unknown peasant author of this hymn was inspired by the words of the angels to the shepherds on Christmas Eve...

Luke 2: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this

day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'" (btw, I always read this and hear the voice of Linus reciting it from Shultz's *Peanuts Christmas* – I loved that show!)

Good Tidings of Great Joy... or, as the song says, "Oh tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, oh tidings of comfort and joy." Another document from the 16th century jumps to mind when I read about comfort and joy, the Heidelberg Catechism. In its opening sentence, the catechism asks the question, "What is your only *comfort*, in life and in death?" The short and most profound answer is this: "That I belong, body and soul, in life and in death, not to myself, but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ."

We all know that the holidays can be stressful times. We all know that any annual celebration often marks the loss of loved ones. But we are not without comfort, and we are not without joy. The angels said to the shepherds, "For unto YOU...is born a savior." Christ has come for you! Christ is your savior! Yes, Christ came to save the world, but Christ also came for you. It's personal: you are God's dear child. I can almost hear the shepherd sheepishly respond to the angelic declaration: "Um... are you talking to me?" And the angel in reply says, "YES...unto YOU means You, unto You is born a savior." Be strong, be of good courage, because God has become flesh to save you, to bring peace to you and peace on this earth. To give you strength in times of weakness, joy in times of sorrow. This Advent season may the Joy of Christ give you strength, joy, and hope.

Now be at rest and be merry!

Pastor Craig

Advent and Christmas Schedule 2022

December 9 & 10th

Parking Lot Cocoa 6-8pm

December 11th

Children's Christmas Musical; 9 & 11am

December 16th

Parking Lot Cocoa 6-8pm

December 18th

Advent Worship Services; 9 & 11am

Parking Lot Cocoa 6-8pm

December 24th

Family Christmas Eve Service @ 7pm

Candlelight Service with Brass & Choir @ 10pm

December 25th

NO worship Service; MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Christmas Cocoa Outreach

as our gift to you all at no cost

FREE

Parking, HOT COCOA, S'mores, Hot Dogs, Popcorn, Cookies,
Christmas Music, and Cozy Fire Pits

Friday & Saturday, Dec 9th & 10th 6-8pm

Friday, Saturday, & Sunday, Dec 16-18th 6-8pm

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Sunday, December 11th

During BOTH Services,
Kid's Club and Zoe Zone Present

A SUPERHERO CHRISTMAS



Come and enjoy this
wonderful Musical performed
by our very own children &
youth ministry.



Come celebrate Christmas as we look at the details of
our Savior's birth during every Sunday mornings
during worship service.

Don't miss our Kid's Club Christmas
Party on Wednesday, December 14th
at 6pm.



We will be returning to Guatemala!

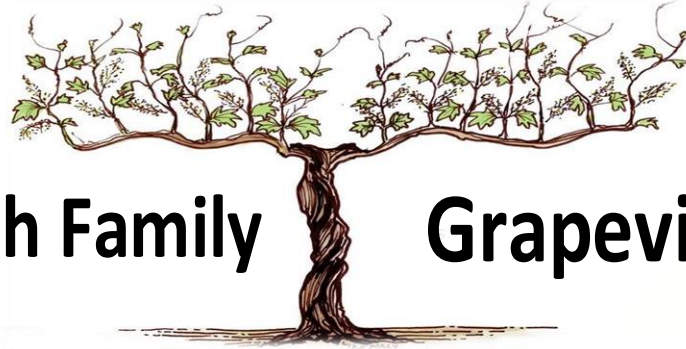
June 28 through July 5, 2023

- build houses
- distribute food
- clothing
- seat people in wheelchairs
- visit those in need
- play with and teach children about Christ

Now is the time! Let Marcy know if you are interested in
joining the 2023 Guatemala Mission team. This is a
chance to serve God by serving others as we seat people
in wheelchairs, build houses, play with children, visit
those in need and hear their stories, and give food. High
School Age and Up. Need to be able to walk in rough
terrain. (Younger team members are welcome but must
bring their parent.)



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)
Brunton, Bob (H)
Julie Callahan(S,H)
Hartzell, Daniel (H)
Hope, Laurie (H)
Lizabeth Jameson (H)
Josh, Sheila (H)
Lowe, Marge (H)
McBride, Neil (H)
Mizicko, Marlana (H)
Narita, Leona (H)
Reeves, Jean (H)
Runsten, Tricia (Darlene's Daughter) (H)
Taylor, Paul (H)
Vesperman, Dick (H)
Wallace, Dan (H)



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



Birthdays

Dec 2 Nancy Clegg
Dec 5 Rev. Nancy Clegg
Dec 12 Robert England
Dec 15 Russell Limprecht
Dec 17 John Sims
Dec 18 Ray Houlihan
Dec 20 Susan England
Dec 21 Donna Lansing
Dec 23 Joann Wickwire
Dec 26 Sue Strickland
Dec 30 Ashley Yonan

Anniversaries

Dec 16 Arby & Marilyn Hoobyar
Dec 28 Bob & Maxine Kisling

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

NEED PRAYER?

*We are here to
pray for you.*



*A Blessed Christmas
Season to All!*

*Worship fully!
Live radically!
Love completely!*



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

FPC Turlock's Mission Faire held annually in December has been a longstanding tradition that has helped many people locally and around the world live a better life. This year we will once again hold our Mission Faire in Voight Hall. Please stop by and prayerfully give to the ones you'd like to support with your donations. However, if you're unable to attend, it does not mean you still can't help those that need help the most, especially during these troubled times.

Please take notice of the Mission Faire flyer on the next page. To donate, simply fill out the bottom section and return it with your checks made payable to "First Presbyterian Church" and all donations will be forwarded to the mission project(s) of your choice along with all other FPC donations. There are three different ways of giving: a) Mail to 2619 N. Berkeley Avenue, Turlock, CA. 95382; b) Drop your donation in the secure mail box outside the church office; or c) Give online on our webpage, www.fpturlock.com.

Thank you for your continued generous support! ~ *FPC Mission Committee*



CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

This special annual offering reflects that God is with us and your gifts are a reflection of His love. Through your generous giving we will be able to offer assistance in two areas. 1) For retired and active church leaders in need (through programs of the Presbyterian Board of Pensions), and 2) for needy students at the Presbyterian racial ethnic schools and colleges.

Please consider giving generously....for when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot! You may give through the church offering, donate by credit card online at peusa.org/christmasjoy or simply text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999 or visit peusa.org/christmasjoy. Thank you!

Reaching » the Nations

Through our Local & Global Support



JOIN US IN OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MISSION FAIRE

Gifts purchased from any of these ministries convey the true spirit of Christmas while helping the growth & life-supporting work of each ministry.

- ... **YOUTH MISSION SCHOLARSHIP FUND** help provide Christian camping or mission trips to the youth of our church family.
- ... **HEIFER INTERNATIONAL** gives hope and dignity to communities around the world through the sharing of livestock and education projects.
- ... **FPC GUATEMALA MISSION** will support the work of the FPC team as they reach out to impoverished families in Guatemala by providing houses, wheelchairs, stoves, bunk-beds, bathrooms, and food.
- ... **MISSIONARIES BEN & EMILY MOONEY** serve full-time in Guatemala bringing Christ's love to the people.
- ... **LOVE JUSTICE, PREM-MAA** is compelled by God's Love to fight the world's greatest injustices, Human Trafficking. Through transit monitoring and interception, they have attacked trafficking at the most strategic moment—while it is in the process of occurring and BEFORE exploitation and enslavement. They have saved over 12,000 people from slavery, exploitation, and abuse. Kindly donate to them directly.
- ... **TGM WINTER HOMELESS SHELTER** helps the Turlock Gospel Mission to provide meals and shelter during winter months.
- ... **"GIFTS FOR KIDS"** shares God's love to very special children in one of three Group Homes. You can donate here or contact Martin Purdy to select a child's name and buy Christmas gifts for him or her.

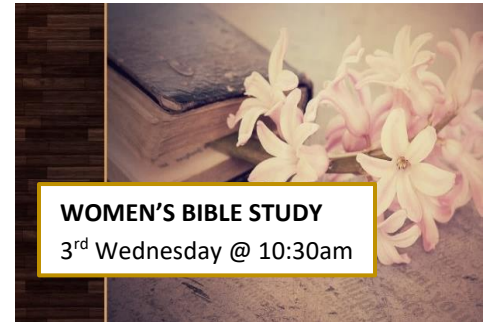
— — — — — ▪ Cut along this line and return the form below with your donation — — — — —

FPC Turlock 2022 - CHRISTMAS MISSION FAIRE

ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT	ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT
YOUTH MISSION SCHOLARSHIP FUND	\$ _____	BEN & EMILY MOONEY MISSIONARIES	\$ _____
HEIFER INTERNATIONAL	\$ _____	TGM WINTER HOMELESS SHELTER	\$ _____
FPC GUATEMALA MISSION TEAM	\$ _____	"GIFTS FOR KIDS"	\$ _____
These gifts have been donated by _____		TOTAL \$ _____	

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN BIBLE STUDY

PW Women's Bible Study usually meets on the third Wednesday morning of the month. Our next gathering will take place on the second Wednesday, December 14, at 10:30 am in Voight Hall. This month instead of Bible Study, we will be signing Christmas cards to send to those not able to get out and about or need encouragement. There will not be a Zoom link for this meeting. Finger foods/goodies may be brought to share.



Regular Bible Study lesson will resume on Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at 10:30 am in Voight Hall/Zoom. We will continue our lessons from Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight authored by Carol M. Bechtel. In this Bible study we will 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 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. We encourage you to bring a friend.

♪♪ Notes from the Music Room ♪♪

*O Come, Desire of nations,
Bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

That is the last verse of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel", and how it reflects the yearnings of our hearts. How we wish that envy, strife and discord would cease, but how?

I was once a part of a Peacemaking Committee, and at our first meeting we tried to define our task. After about an hour we finally came up with a plan to spend the first three months talking and studying about personal peace, what that would look like and how we could achieve it. The second three months we would study peace in our families, and how that might be accomplished! (Think about that!) Our third study was about how we might work toward peace in our town. And finally, we were to study and work toward peace in our world.

At the end of our year of 'Peacemaking', we had not 'filled the whole world with heaven's peace'! But we had indeed learned a lot!

In this season of Advent, I would challenge each of us to look for the ways in which Christ is urging us, pointing us toward bringing peace to our part of the world. How can we be the messengers of peace in our families, our communities, our part of the world? And then on Christmas Eve we will sing this hymn with great joy!

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!

Rev. Wendy Warner,
Director of Music

DEACONS TEAM MINISTRY

Deacons had a very busy November. We cancelled our regularly scheduled Deacon meeting in November as it was in between the events we were hosting.

We hosted the memorial luncheon for Betty Smith on Saturday, November 12th. It was a wonderful service as well as a wonderful meal of stuffed pork loin (thank you Pastor Craig) and other delectable foods. A huge thank you to Marcy, also, for guiding us and showing us how to make wonderful food for so many people. A huge thank you to so many people who helped in the kitchen.

We also hosted the 'Tidings of Comfort' dinner on Wednesday, November 16th, four days later. Again, huge amounts of food made from scratch (thank you Marcy and Craig) that was absolutely delicious. Wow! Thank you to the thousands (it seemed like there were that many) who helped Deacons with setting up, preparing, and cleaning up. Wow! Our church really knows how to put out fabulous food.

We still have many people who still need to complete an updated directory form. I know many people have moved, deleted home phones, or changed cell phone numbers, so please contact us. These forms are available in the church office or on the name tag table as you walk in the church. If you have not completed a form, please contact your Deacon or Polet in the church office. We want this directory to be complete and as current as possible. Thank you so much for your assistance.

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

In Christ,
Darlene Runsten, Moderator
Moderator

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session last met on November 28, 2022.

Action Items:

- Approved entering into a maintenance agreement with Saunders Heating & Air to service the HVAC units annually.
- Approved permission to dispose of the bulky stage extensions and the riding lawn mower stored in the outdoor shed and pursue solutions for disposal of these items.
- Approved to complete a previously agreed to purchase of a washer/dryer unit to be placed in the custodial closet subject to availability of funds.

As we enter the season of advent, please keep in mind the reason for the season, the arrival of Jesus the Christ on Christmas morn. Stop to breathe amid the hustle and bustle of the season and listen closely to the words of the Christmas carols and hymns as they tell the story of Jesus. Safe travels to those of you on the road and in the skies.

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

FINANCE UPDATE

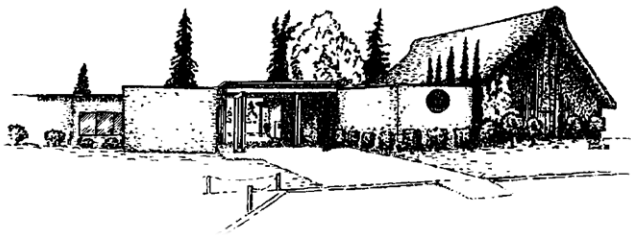
Income & Expense Year to Date
Ending October 31, 2022

Contributions: \$250,462
Other Income: \$49,926
Total Income: \$300,388
Expenses: \$314,003
Excess Expense: (\$13,615)

We hope you all had a safe and blessed Thanksgiving joined by family and friends. The Finance Committee and Session are continually grateful for the financial support of FPC. We continue to reduce the excess expense and we are praying for strong giving in November and December and have the opportunity to meet expenses and save some funds in our operating reserve for future challenges. Thanks for all you do.

May God bless each and every one of you,
Your Finance Committee





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

Phone # (209) 632-2324

E-mail: fpcturlock@att.net

Website: www.fpturlock.com

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: Kim Sasman
Accompanist: Dr. Wayne Kidwell
Organist: Barbara Bort
Child Care: Rebecca Staley
Janitor: Michael Morris

ELECTED DEACONS AND SESSION OFFICERS

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