

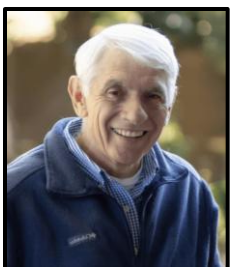
FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

EST. 1909

First Press

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TURLOCK, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 2026



Mahatma Gandhi once said, *"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." It is an interesting quote because Gandhi, a Hindu, seems to put profound importance on the Bible.

His quote points out that many of us who follow Jesus (Christians) do not treat the Bible with the same importance nor use it as it was intended to be used. Pope Francis quoted Gandhi in his prologue to a youth Bible. He emphasized that the Scripture is meant to be a revolutionary, living document rather than a passive object that we keep on the bookshelf.

Most Christians have a copy (or many copies) of the Bible in their homes. Many of us now have it on our phones for easy access. The Bible has been the best-selling book of all time for centuries. According to Guinness World Records, it is the most widely distributed book in history, with an estimated 5 – 7 billion copies printed. [note: you will rarely see it listed on the New York Times or Amazon's top 10 list, because they usually track new releases.] Literary experts consistently note that the Bible is the #1 bestselling book of the year, every single year. Yes, most all of us have access to the Bible

The problem for us is not the availability of the Bible but understanding the Bible. It was after all, written over 2,000 years ago. It was written on three different continents: Asia, Africa and Europe. It was written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) that most of us don't speak. And it was not written to us, but to an audience from the ancient Greek, Roman, Jewish, etc. cultures.

It is no wonder that at times we have some difficulty in understanding its meaning. In order to understand it, we

must first ask, what did it mean to the original readers or hearers of the text? This process requires us to do some work. We must learn some of the historical context of the Bible. We must ask, what do those words mean? We must study tenses, punctuation and cultural idioms of the day. This does require some work. But it is well worth it.

One of the ways to help us in our study of the Scripture is to do it together. To combine our knowledge and share with others in their knowledge of the Scripture. Studying the Bible alone is absolute great, but studying together may be more helpful at times. Please find a Bible study where you can gain knowledge that goes beyond yourself. Learn from the collective wisdom of others.

Fortunately, we have several such Bible study groups at our church. Starting Sunday, September 6th, there will be a Bible study of I Corinthians and Galatians. This study will be in Voight Hall at 1:30. There is also a study sponsored by our Presbyterian Women. It meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 10:30 in Voight Hall. This year they are also studying First Corinthians with a theme of: "United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other." Finally, there is a Wednesday morning Bible study that is going through the Gospel of Luke. I teach this class and it is one of my favorite hours of the week. We meet on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 AM. You can even join us on Zoom.

Ghandi was right. The Bible is a powerful tool that the Lord gave us. If we followed it's teachings the world would be a different and better place. And that is one thing we can all agree on: our world needs to be a different and better place.

Thanks for reading these ramblings, and thanks for letting me be your pastor.

Pastor Rick Lemberg

Announcements

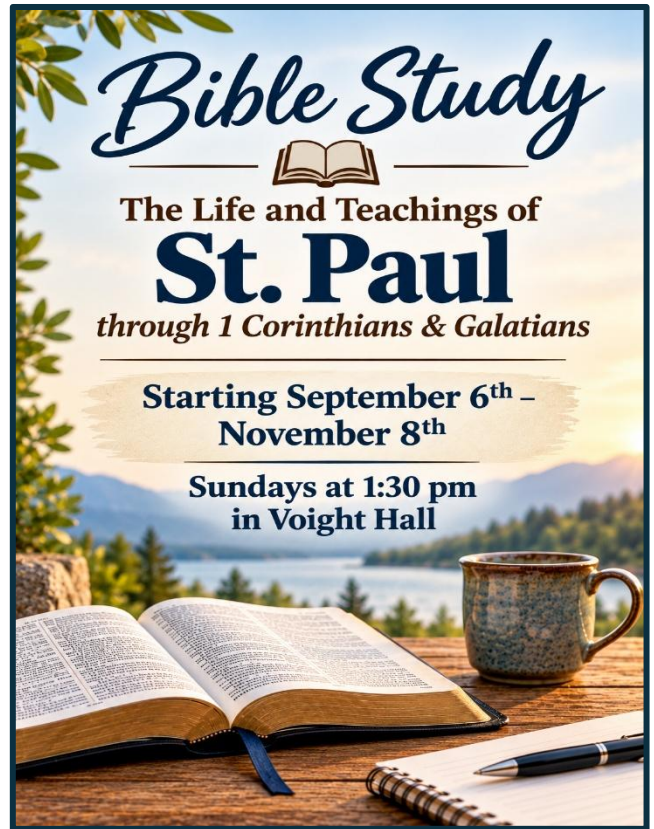


MUSIC MINISTRY

Rehearsal Schedule

CHOIR: Starting on September 2nd
Every Wednesday @ 6:30 pm &
Sundays @ 9:00 am

BELLS: Starting on September 8th
Every Tuesday @ 5:15 pm

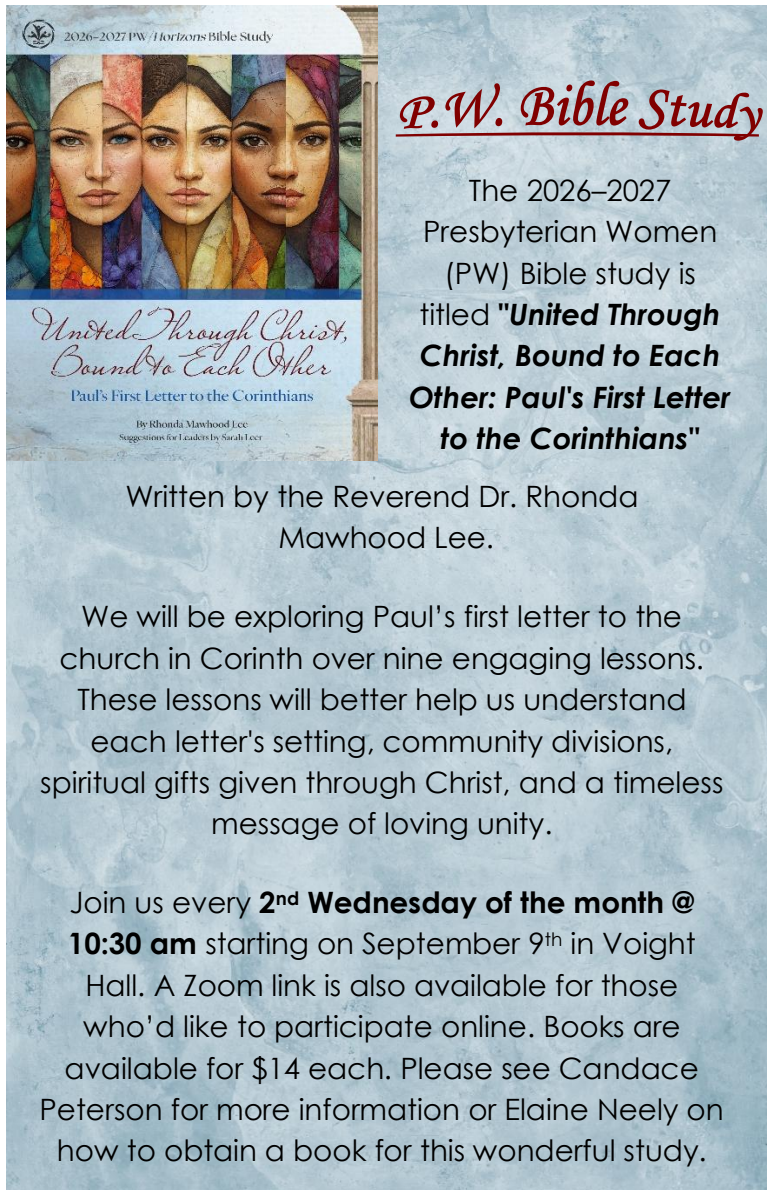


Bible Study

The Life and Teachings of
St. Paul
through 1 Corinthians & Galatians

Starting September 6th –
November 8th

Sundays at 1:30 pm
in Voight Hall



2026–2027 PW / Horizons Bible Study

P.W. Bible Study

The 2026–2027 Presbyterian Women (PW) Bible study is titled "**United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians**"

Written by the Reverend Dr. Rhonda Mawhood Lee.

We will be exploring Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth over nine engaging lessons. These lessons will better help us understand each letter's setting, community divisions, spiritual gifts given through Christ, and a timeless message of loving unity.

Join us every **2nd Wednesday of the month @ 10:30 am** starting on September 9th in Voight Hall. A Zoom link is also available for those who'd like to participate online. Books are available for \$14 each. Please see Candace Peterson for more information or Elaine Neely on how to obtain a book for this wonderful study.



Second Friday Fellowship Group

DUSTBOWL BREWERY

September 11th
at 6:00 pm

Dustbowl Brewery
3000 Fulkerth Rd,
Turlock

No Host Dinner!
Your cost is your item off the menu.

Kindly RSVP
Alison Aldax @ 209.606.1194
by September 9th.

Thank you for being part of this wonderful & fun gathering.

Mission Ministry



Have you been wanting to be more hands-on with our meal ministry to the Turlock Gospel Mission (TGM)? We've placed a little red wagon in the Narthex marked "TGM Meal Ministry" and invite anyone who would like to bring either canned green beans or canned sliced peaches to place them in the wagon. Can sizes can be anything from 15 oz. to 106 oz. (the very large can size is available at Smart & Final or at Walmart). The monthly meal is for 75 people, so we need 2 cases of 15 oz. cans or 3 of the very large 106 oz. cans.

The fundraising we do each year for TGM at the Missions Faire and the rummage sale held last May have replenished our coffers, but we definitely notice that it costs us more today to provide this monthly meal. Your canned good contributions will help us stretch those funds even further!

If you have questions, feel free to contact any member of the Missions Committee (Susie England, Kathleen Gunn, Gabriel Njock, Priscilla Peters, and Martin & Jana Purdy.)

WORLD COMMUNION OFFERING SUNDAY



*"What does the Lord require of you? "
"... To do justice and to love kindness and walk humbly with your God."
Micah 6:8*

The World Communion Offering, received during A Season of Preparation leading up to World Communion Sunday, (the first Sunday in October), is a way for Presbyterians to "love kindness" expressed in action, often involving mercy, faithfulness and steadfast commitment.

World Communion Offering previously called Peace & Global Witness Offering is one of three annual Churchwide Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). These three offerings play an important role in defining what it means to be a connectional church, bringing together the diversity of the PC U.S.A to focus and take faith-based action on shared concerns. The Offerings offer opportunities for partnership, learning and witness and profoundly affect the life of the church as a collective witness to Jesus Christ's love for the whole church.

Please give generously! When we all give a little, it adds up to a lot.

Outreach Ministries

The Learning Zone Tutoring Program



We are so excited to start tutoring on September 15 and 16. Not only do we have most of our tutors returning but almost all of our students too. I will continue to recruit more students as long as we have enough tutors. We are dedicated to doing one on one tutoring. In the future, I will begin introducing our tutors and students. We want to stay connected to the church and this will help you know who we are.



Darlene Runsten

Darlene is a familiar face around First Presbyterian Church. Darlene is a retired teacher; she started teaching at 40 and taught for 23 years. She is a Deacon, plays in the Bell Choir but that is not all. Darlene has been a tutor for more years than she can count but a few years after we started. She is also Terri's confidant, cheerleader and always ready to offer wonderful advice. Her hobbies are water coloring, reading and rescuing ducks (ask her). Her favorite part of tutoring is seeing the "light go on" and challenging students. We are so blessed to have Darlene as part of our team.



Terri Rodger

Two years ago, I received a call from Cyndi Sims and Darlene Runsten asking me to be the Director of our tutoring program. Initially I said "no" but after a prayer and thinking about it for about an hour, I called and said "YES"! What a blessing this has been. Our church has been so blessed to provide this program for the children of our community.

For those who do not know me, I have been a part of our church since 1978 when I got married in our beautiful orange sanctuary which clashed with my mauve, pink and gray colors 😊 Since then I have been an Elder, Deacon, Sunday School Teacher, and Youth Leader. I left the church for a few years but "I'm back"!

I taught for 34 years in Delhi and Turlock School District and cherished every minute of it. I am passionate about our tutoring program. I love connecting with tutors, parents, and children. I anticipate that this will be our best year. Thank you for making the program possible. First Presbyterian ROCKS!!!!

Music Ministry

♪ Notes from the Music Room ♪



Once in a while, when I am working with my hands, I send a prayer to Jesus thanking Him for my hands and my fingers. I think “WOW” look at all I accomplish with my hands! I do chores like washing the dishes, folding laundry, pulling weeds, kneading bread, playing the piano, and directing the choir. I thank Jesus and admit that I don’t take my hands for granted. I need them!

A few months ago, I read in a devotional article about a newborn’s “palmer grasp reflex”. This devotional was written by a neonatal nurse practitioner, Suzanne Davenport Tietjen. She explained that this grasping reflex begins in the womb and is the reason a baby will grasp/hold on to an object (tightly) when they feel it in the palm of their hand. Suzanne went on to say that being aware of this grasping reflex was “spiritually significant” to her. That point made a real impression on me. I too want to “take hold of faith”; I want to grasp and hold on tight to one end of my lifeline and ask Jesus to hold on tight to the other end. I want to be intentional about trusting Jesus to guide my thoughts, actions, and activities.

During these past couple of months that our choir and handbell ensembles have been “on vacation”, I have been going through lots of new music and making plans for Fall and Christmas Sunday performances. I have been sitting at the keyboard playing through the melody, accompaniment, choral parts, and studying the lyrics. I have been “holding on by faith” that my decisions will benefit our worship service and will be a blessing to all who participate and to all of you in the congregation who listen. It is a privilege to be part of the music ministry at FPC and to serve our great God!

Take note Choir members: Regular Wednesday rehearsals begin on September 2nd at 6:30 pm. The Bell Ringers, Rehearsals begin on Tuesday, September 8th at 5:15 pm.

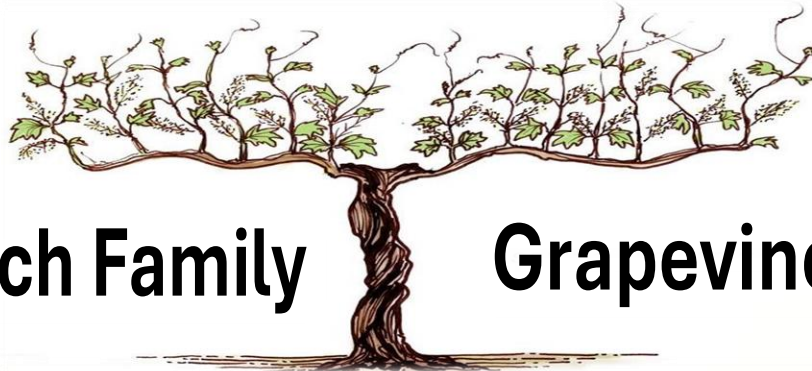
Serving in Song,

*Marilyn Fullmer
Music Director*



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

Chuck Ballmer's Family
(Kathy Lemberg's Dad) (G)

Blixt, Elizabeth (H)

Callahan, Julie (H)

Kidwell Family (G)

Lanchester, Irene (H)

Lowe, Marge (H)

Mirza, Julius (Jay) (H)

Runsten, Tricia (Darlene's Daughter) (H)

Sauer, Sheila (Cyndi Sims's sister) (H)

Tom Sims' Family (John Sims' Brother) (G)

Taylor, Paul (H)

Wolf, Adele (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

Sept 17 Gail Ballas
Sept 20 Lauren Reid
Sept 22 Brandon Purdy
Sept 25 Dwight Hooper
Sept 26 Nancy Seaver
Sept 27 Lynn Posluch
Sept 28 Jayne Smith
Sept 30 Candace Peterson

Anniversaries

Sept 4 Ken & Pat Weisel

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



SEPTEMBER 2026

Communion Team – September

Candace Peterson & Michael Betts {Elders}
Bill Bishop & Nancy Seaver {Deacons}

Worship Assistants

September 6th Candace Peterson
September 13th Susan England
September 20th Dave Posluch
September 27th Michael Betts



SUNDAY GREETERS FOR SEPTEMBER

September 6th Manuel & Margaret Vasquez
September 13th Joann Coffman & Lynn Posluch
September 20th Nancy Seaver & Darlene Runsten
September 27th John & Cyndi Sims

Session & Finance Ministries

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session last met on August 24, 2026.

Of interest:

- Approved a motion from the Christian Education Committee to purchase workbooks for tutoring for students who do not have homework and need help in certain areas, and to ask parents to pay for the workbooks if they are able to.
- Approved to accept a donation of an upright piano from the Wayne Kidwell family.
- At the Congregational Meeting on August 23rd, the membership voted in Francisco Molina as its member-at-large, and Bill DeHart as an alternate for the 2026 Nominating Committee.

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

FINANCE UPDATE

Income/Expense Report for July 2026

July Contributions:	\$ 19,418.00	YTD Contributions:	\$134,776.50
July Other Income:	\$ 2,857.93	YTD Other Income	\$ 17,698.05
July Expenses:	(\$ 21,142.90)	YTD Expenses:	(\$173,698.57)
Difference:	(\$ 1,143.03)	YTD Difference:	\$ 3,361.98

Dear Church Family,

With the summer coming to a close and the fall just right around the corner, our church is facing a shortage of funds, and regular giving has not been enough to fully support our ongoing ministries, operating needs, and future commitments. This financial need is especially important as we prepare for the process of calling a new pastor to lead and serve our congregation.

Calling a pastor is both a spiritual and practical commitment. We ask every member and friend of the church to prayerfully consider how they can contribute—increasing their giving through regular tithes and offerings, additional monthly contributions, a special gift from possible investments or an IRA, through prayer, through service, and through the faithful use of their gifts. Every act of generosity, whether financial or spiritual, helps strengthen our ministry and prepares us to move forward faithfully into this next chapter. We must not allow fear to stop us from growing, evolving, and progressing. We can do this! We have been a church for over 115 years and one thing that has been certain all these years is that God is always with us and with Him, all is possible. Thank you for your generous hearts and thank you for your support of First Presbyterian Church, Turlock.

In His Name,

FPC Administration Committee

Serving Behind the Scenes

My Red Cross Deployment to the Spokane Complex Fires

By Dan Hardesty, Chief of Disaster Services Technology



My deployment began with a phone call from the American Red Cross on August 3, asking if I could deploy to Spokane, Washington, as Chief of Disaster Services Technology for the response to the Spokane Complex Fires.

The three fast-moving fires—the Old Trails, Autumn Lane, and Fairview Fires—had begun on August 1 and burned nearly 10,000 acres, spreading into residential communities and forcing many families to evacuate. Of 1,319 homes assessed, 640 were destroyed or

sustained major damage. Fortunately, despite the extensive destruction, no deaths or injuries were reported.

Before leaving home, I contacted Red Cross national headquarters and the leadership already in Spokane to determine what technology would be needed. We made sure that equipment was already on order before I boarded my flight Tuesday morning.

When I arrived in Spokane, the first shipment had beaten me there. Two members of my team were already at the small Red Cross chapter office, unpacking and inventorying equipment and beginning to issue it to arriving disaster workers.

Housing was another challenge. The volunteers were arriving faster than accommodations could be found. Two members of my team had spent their first nights sleeping on cots in the Red Cross office. My first night was in a dormitory room at Eastern Washington University, along with many other newly arrived Red Cross volunteers.

The next day, our technology team began settling into its primary job: making sure Red Cross workers could communicate and had the technology they needed wherever they were working. We distributed and installed computers, phones, printers, networking equipment and other technology at the various Red Cross locations.

Within a few days, it became obvious that the small chapter office could not support an operation of this size. The Red Cross leased space in a much larger office complex to serve as the headquarters.

At about four o'clock one afternoon, we learned that the Red Cross had just received the key. There was no internet service in the new facility, but the building needed to be operational the following morning.

Four of us went to work.

With support from our national headquarters, we installed a Starlink satellite internet connection and a Cradlepoint cellular networking system and established Wi-Fi throughout the facility. Within three or four hours, the new headquarters had a working network and good Wi-Fi coverage.

As an engineer, I found that particularly impressive. Not many years ago, establishing reliable communications in a new disaster headquarters could have taken days or longer. With today's technology, we were able to walk into an essentially disconnected building late in the afternoon and have a functioning communications network operating that evening. That network continued serving the headquarters throughout the response.

I was fortunate to have an exceptionally capable technology team. Their backgrounds ranged from computer science and engineering to a technician with 30 years of Navy experience, along with some people who were simply computer whizzes. Their skill and willingness to solve whatever problem appeared made my job much easier.

Serving Behind the Scenes Cont.

As chief, much of my work became administrative rather than technical. I brought new people into the team, dealt with personnel issues, arranged days off, attended meetings to keep our group informed about the changing operation, ordered equipment and mentored new staff when necessary. My responsibility was to make sure my team had what they needed so they could make sure everyone else had what they needed.

As the response progressed, the Red Cross mission also changed. The early emphasis on evacuation and sheltering gradually shifted toward helping people begin recovering—especially families whose homes had been destroyed or seriously damaged.

Sites were established where affected residents could receive assistance from the Red Cross and our community partners. Feeding operations continued, supplies were distributed, and people began the difficult process of determining what came next. By the time of my deployment, the response had provided more than 13,000 meals and snacks and distributed more than 2,300 wildfire safety kits.

Behind those services was a considerable technology infrastructure. Each site needed communications. At a minimum, that usually meant phones and computers and, in some locations, printers and network equipment. Our technology team worked mostly behind the scenes, but communications are essential to almost everything the Red Cross does during a disaster.

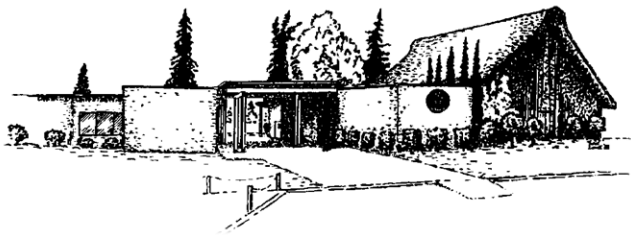
Over my two-week assignment, I watched the operation change dramatically. What began with considerable chaos—people arriving, equipment being shipped, temporary sleeping arrangements and facilities being established—gradually became an organized and effective disaster response involving hundreds of trained Red Cross workers.

By the end of my deployment, a completely new technology staff had arrived, including the chief who would replace me. We transferred our responsibilities to them, and I was able to board an airplane and return home.

The technology was impressive, but what I will remember most is the people. Disaster workers came from many different backgrounds and from across the country, bringing their individual skills to a common mission. Some worked directly with families who had lost their homes. Others prepared and distributed food and supplies. And some of us worked behind the scenes, making sure those people could communicate and had the technology necessary to do their jobs.

That is one of the strengths of the Red Cross. In the middle of a disaster, hundreds of people with different skills can come together very quickly, organize themselves around a common purpose, and help a community begin to recover.





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E-mail: fpcturlock@att.net

Website: www.fpturlock.com

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurch



To Know Christ and
Make Him Known



HELLO
September

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 2026

Michael Betts
Susie England
Donna Harrison
David Posluch

Elders

Class of 2027

Kathleen Gunn
Candace Peterson
Dean Sasman

Elders

Class of 2028

Marilyn Hoobyar
John Miles
Martin Purdy

Deacons

Class of 2026

Lynn Posluch
Jana Purdy
Kim Sasman
Lorna Schmidt
Nancy Seaver

Deacons

Class of 2027

Bill Bishop
Jo Coffman
Donna Lansing
Darlene Runsten
Heidi Shearer

Deacons

Class of 2028

Diane Arakelian
Gail Ballas
Pat Rubalcava
Cyndi Sims