

FIRST PRES PRESS



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PALO ALTO

WWW.FPRESPA.ORG

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Dear Companions on the Way,

It has been a rich July in worship with the worship teams' involvement in planning and participating in the services. What a gifted congregation you are! Many have commented on what hope our young people bring to us as we see what beautiful souls they have. It is wonderful to have us all together again. I have to thank Marissa for the idea and Rob for the idea of following up the Psalms class. I was feeling I didn't have the energy for the extra boost it would take to pull this series off, but I have found myself energized by the work with those involved and inspired by their faith and practice.

It has also been a rich July in service. One of the supervisors in Hotel de Zink asked me, "Is this a thousand member church? I have seen so many different people bringing food! They are amazing!" I replied that this is an extraordinary group of dedicated human beings. It's interesting that he asked about 1000 members because I have often thought that we have programs and ideas that reflect a much larger membership than we have. I have been struck by the courage and dignity of our guests, our common humanity, and the gifts each has. We began with two women, but both have dropped out of the program. The men include an ex-newscaster, an aspiring actor, a guitarist good enough to be professional, an artist, and an aspiring scholar. We have people who are employed as well as those who are unemployed and looking for work. We have people who are valiantly trying to conquer their demons...good work for us all. Thank you for your generous care for them during their time under our roof. A special thanks to Paul Jones, who has greeted them every morning with grace and encouragement that surely warms them. Kudos to Anne Irons and the deacons: Anne for organizing the meals and the deacons for taking a week each to see that they are varied and complete.

Now we look to August and the joint services. The first week, August 2, we will be at Covenant; the second week, the 9th, we will be at First Pres; and the third week, the 16th, we will be at First Baptist. We will need people to bring goodies to share as we provide hospitality the second week. Rob returns just in time for that service. Each church will focus on the story of the Prodigal Son, so we will get three different reads on the one story. The services will begin at 10 o'clock, and there will be child care. The contemplative service will meet here at 8:30 am as usual. PLEASE JOIN US! This is our opportunity to be neighborly and to see how others do worship in a different way. In addition, my good-bye will be August 23rd, and there will be the all-church picnic on August 30th, so it will be a full month.

Many of you—especially families—have traveled this summer. I hope you have returned refreshed and renewed. Whether or not you have traveled, I hope you all have had some time to reflect on the way God weaves in and out and through our lives, always seeking us, always challenging us, always loving us, calling us to live out of the love offered to us so freely.

I will return from a family reunion in Estes Park on the 31st of July, and August will be my last month with you. It is a bitter sweet time for me. Writing a farewell note to you feels a little premature at this point, so I have chosen not to do so until September when I am gone. Let us enjoy this last month to the fullest and celebrate the work we have done, the love we have shared, the vision we try to live each day. Thank you for all the gifts you have given to me in your outpouring of time, talent, imagination, and love. I will treasure them and you always.

Love,

Nan

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Summer Worship Schedule

August 2, 2009:	8:30 AM — Contemplative Service –Nan Crawford Swanson 10:00 AM— Union Service—Covenant Presbyterian Church
August 9, 2009:	8:30 AM — Contemplative Service –Nan Crawford Swanson 10:00 AM— Union Service, First Presbyterian Church
August 16, 2009:	8:30 AM — Contemplative Service –Nan Crawford Swanson 10:00 AM— Union Service, First Baptist Church
August 23, 2009:	8:30 AM — Contemplative Service –Nan Crawford Swanson 10:00 AM— Community Service – Nan Crawford Swanson 11:00 AM— A Celebration of Nan’s Ministry in our Midst
August 30, 2009:	8:30 AM — Contemplative Service –Nan Crawford Swanson 10:00 AM— Community Service – W. Robert Martin, III 11:00 AM— Church Picnic
September 6, 2009:	8:30 AM — Contemplative Service – W. Robert Martin, III 10:00 AM— Community Service – W. Robert Martin, III
September 13, 2009:	8:30 AM — Ingathering Breakfast 10:00 AM— Community Service – W. Robert Martin, III

Other August Activities

“YOU LOST, KIDDO!”

Prime Timers challenge the kids and youth of this congregation to a Wii game contest. Join the fray! Root for a Prime Timer!

Paul Jones says, “I’ll take on any young person in this church and I’ll beat ya!”

Frances Young says, “I’m the bowler who will strike you out!”

Anne Irons says, “Get ready to pack your bag, kid. You’re toast!”

“BRING IT ON!”

say the kids and youth of this congregation. Prime Timers have boldly challenged all kids and youth to a Wii showdown. The kids are pumped and primed for the junior/senior Wii smackdown.

Overheard in the pews:

“Prime Timers are going down. “

“You can come to our victory party when we win.”

“This will be as easy as pie or cake, your choice.”

“Compared to us, motorcycles are as cute as puppies, so watch out.”

“Youth rules!”

INTERGENERATIONAL WII CONTEST

Friday, August 7, 6:30-9:00 pm

A Generational Challenge, Fellowship Hall. THE social event of the summer. All are welcome. You’re going to love it! Will you choose sides?

Simple summer supper followed by game-mania followed by presentation of awards followed by dessert. \$5/person or \$15/family for supper. Bring a beverage or a pint of ice cream topping to share.

We need volunteers for setup, cleanup, greeter/cashier,
plus the loan of one Wii system.

Contact Marissa (mmyers@fprespa.org).

The old forget, the young don’t know (German proverb).



What:
ALL CHURCH PICNIC
(BBQ and Block Party)

When:
Sunday, August 30, from
11am-1:30 pm

Where:
in front of 1st Pres on Cowper Street

Who:
1st Pres folks, TLC families, and our Lincoln/
Cowper neighbors



How does this work? We'll grill burgers and hot dogs and provide condiments, drinks, plates, and utensils. You'll bring something to share (such as salad, dessert, fruit, or chips). We'll have a water slide, crafts and games for the kids, plus live music.

Can you help out? Many hands make light work! We need help with setup (9-10 am), grilling during the picnic, and cleanup afterward. If you can help, please contact Jack Schaupt (494-8340).

Also Note...

PAT PLANT—HUNGER ADVOCATE FOR SAN JOSE
PRESBYTERY—INVITES YOU TO THE FOLLOWING:

Just-**FAITH**

Founder and Director
JACK JEZREEL

Thursday, August 6

RSVP to either/both events to Pat Plant:
pat@sanjoseby.org, (408)279-0220

Pastors and Church leaders: 11:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at
Los Altos United Methodist Church, 655 Magdalena
Ave., Los Altos (off Foothill Expressway). Suggested
donation \$10 to cover lunch.

Evening event with Jack: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Recital
Hall at Santa Clara University (between Lafayette
and Alviso Streets, parking across the street on La-
fayette. Suggested donation \$5-\$10.

"Jack may be the best speaker on the subject of
WHY church folks should get out of the pews and
get busy making the world a better place. He is at
the same time gripping, funny, and motivating. He
reminds us of Jesus' hope for his followers and the
good they would do."

Ecumenical classes for JUST FAITH are currently being formed at these churches:

- Covenant Presbyterian Church, Palo Alto
- Los Altos United Methodist Church
- Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church
- Campbell United Methodist Church
- First Presbyterian Church of San Jose
- Santa Teresa Presbyterian Church

Go to our JustFaith webpage for complete details.

JustFaith is a life-changing experience which examines the themes of common good; shared rights and responsibilities; value of human dignity, solidarity, respect for creation; grassroots wisdom and energy; and the call to stand with the poor. These principles invite us to some remarkable possibilities in the name of love and compassion. The vision of Just-Faith speaks to life-giving choices on behalf of a world that struggles to survive. Classes are being formed at churches in Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, San Jose, and Campbell.

For complete details go to: Email Pat Plant or call (408)279-0220



The Rev. Art Simon will talk about his new book, "The Rising of Bread for the World," and about the history of Bread for the World at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, Sept. 1, at 7:30 p.m.

God's grace in Jesus Christ moves us to help our neighbors, whether they live in the next house, the next state or the next continent. Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Our partners represent a broad spectrum of church organizations and faith communities-Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox.

Working with Bread for the World—and using the educational resources they provide—will encourage members of your church to address the root causes of hunger. By changing policies, programs and conditions that allow hunger and poverty.

The Rev. Art Simon, the founder of Bread for the World, tells the surprising story of how God uses ordinary people to make an extraordinary difference in the lives of hungry people. In the 1970s, Art served as a Lutheran pastor in New York's Lower East Side. He brought together Catholics and Protestants in an organized effort to urge Congress to

address the root causes of hunger. Today, 35 years later, Bread for the World is the nation's foremost citizens' voice against hunger..

Copies of the book will be available for \$16.95 plus tax and can be signed by the author.

RSVP to Pat Plant for this once in a lifetime opportunity.



JOIN THE STEP UP CAMPAIGN TODAY !!!

Currently many Santa Clara County people are engaged in serious work to change the status quo for "the least of these" in the county. 25% of Santa Clara County residents live below the poverty line in this very expensive

community. The goal of the campaign is to cut poverty in half by the year 2020. More than 500 people and more than 90 agencies, organizations and individuals with a concern for poverty are part of the working groups for this campaign.

You can join the campaign now, as can your friends and fellow church members. To see the StepUp website click [here](#). To join the Step Up Forum which will link the campaign participants and interested residents, click [here](#) (Consider joining the Interfaith Group which I chair.)

"Never doubt that a small group of concerned citizens can change the world, indeed it's the only thing that has." -- Margaret Mead



Cornerstone Church of Silicon Valley is sponsoring their first annual "Feed the Homeless" Golf Tournament

Where: Moffet Field Golf Course
When: Sat., Aug. 29th, 11:00
Shotgun start at \$75 per person which includes green fee, cart, etc.

Donations and proceeds go to Second Harvest Food Bank of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

[More Golf Tournie info.](#)

AUGUST VACATION SCHEDULE FOR THE STAFF

Rob Martin
August 1st—6th

Nan Swanson
August 1st

Brad Croushorn
August 1st—3rd

Oleta Proctor
August 3rd—5th and 10th—20th

Marissa Myers
August 1st—2nd

Javier Hernandez
August 15th—22nd

Looking Ahead...

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR GRACE GIBSON



The Memorial Service for Grace Gibson will be held in the Sanctuary at 2 pm, Saturday, September 19th .

ADULT STUDY AND CHURCH SCHOOL RESUME ON SEPTEMBER 20!



Save the Dates for the All Church Retreat, September 25-27, at Monte Toyon in Aptos.

Enjoy a weekend in the redwoods where there will be time to really get to know others from 1st Press. There will be activities for the whole family (sharing of stories, meals, hikes, folk-dancing and more). Brochures with more details will be available in late August.

Pat Kinney

Session Highlights

Session will meet on August 12th instead of in July, due to vacation schedules. The article below is reprinted from this month's Alban Institute online news. It reflects conversations Session has had about hopes and visions for our community as we seek renewal, outreach, and extension of our ministries. A sentence near the end of the article summarizes one of our foremost priorities: "the Christian church's basic mission of helping people experience God and live the gospel message of life and hope." May it be so!

Kathy Merkle-Raymond, Clerk

A Place that Offers Life

Daniel P. Smith and Mary K. Sellon

"Finances are tight, and our numbers are dwindling. The congregation is looking to me to turn things around. So is my denomination—that's exactly what I was told when I was appointed here. And, frankly, that's my expectation too. Isn't that my job?" says a pastor of a congregation that has been experiencing decline for many years, voicing the belief of many congregations, denominations, and pastors that when a congregation is declining, it is the pastor's job to fix it.

Here's the hard truth. If you're a layperson in a congregation that's experiencing decline, whether the congregation thrives is ultimately up to you and the other members. Your pastor can teach, guide, lead, support, inspire, even cajole. But in the end, congregational health is a function of how people in the congregation relate to one another, to God, and to their community. A congregation is a microcosm of the greater church, a local embodiment of the body of Christ. In John's Gospel, Jesus says, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). We believe this is one of the primary messages that a healthy congregation embodies for its members and its surrounding community.

A congregation that is truly being church brings people into a loving, life-giving relationship with God and others that is transformational. This is the nature of the kin-dom of God, where covenant relationships model the best aspects of family. People find hope. They experience belonging; they extend and receive forgiveness. They discover a sense of purpose and direction. They learn to live with appreciation and joy no matter what the circumstances. Although a pastor can preach and teach this message, the message has power only to the extent that the people in the congregation live it and practice it with one another. Practicing loving, life-giving relationships transforms congregation members. Witnessing such benefits draws others who want some

thing similar for themselves and their families. Businesses are based on the premise of offering something of value—goods or services—to a customer in exchange for money. Successful businesses "give value for money." Gimmicks and fancy features may bring people through the door, but people won't buy unless they believe they'll receive something of worth. And they'll return and recommend the business to others only if they receive something of value. Congregations are not businesses, yet they can fall into a similar trap of thinking that it's the features and the gimmicks that people want. A congregation's greatest asset, the unique gift it offers, is the people who make up the congregation and the possibilities for transformation they embody.

When we talk about congregational renewal, we mean a renewal of the people's ability to notice and experience God in their midst, a renewal of the congregation's desire to partner with God in achieving God's aims for the world. The term renewal implies that the congregation knew how to do this at one time and that the work is a reclaiming of a lost skill. We find that's not always the case. Some congregations we've worked with have no memory of ever having been a church that talked openly about God and matters of faith. The people have no memory of the congregation's ever having had an evangelistic bent. However, we have yet to encounter a congregation that, when asked to recall moments when its church was really "being church," couldn't name sacred moments when God seemed present and people found healing and hope.

The church-growth movement is often blamed for leading congregations down the path of thinking that bigger is better and that increased numbers equal health and growth. That movement did, however, help raise the question of how to measure congregational health. If the measure is not dollars in the bank or people in the pews, what is it? We hear congregations and pastors wrestling with questions that weren't on the table twenty years ago. "What's the fundamental purpose of church? What difference is a congregation supposed to make in the lives of its members and in its surrounding community? What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? What does it mean to be spiritual? What difference do spiritual practices make?"

These challenging questions are the foundation of renewal, the building blocks of a new future. They are not, however, the point at which most congregations start. Fear of having to close the church or to reduce the services offered to members typically prompts a congregation's desire for renewal: "We

need to do something now, if we're going to still be open a decade from now." This desire to avoid death drives many renewal efforts, and it certainly provides energy. But if the congregation itself doesn't ultimately trade its fear of death for a longing for life, the efforts will end as soon as the danger has passed.

The aim of renewal is not a bigger building or high-tech worship or a slew of professional programs but a new way of looking at church, the work of a congregation, and what it has to offer the world. Congregational renewal is a renewal of the people's understanding of their relationship with God, their relationship with their community, and their calling. In the most fundamental sense, congregational renewal happens through "people renewal." What's renewed in congregational renewal is the people's understanding of their relationship with God, their relationship with their community, and their sense of calling.

No pastor, no program, no resource can make renewal happen. On the other hand, almost any pastor, program, or resource can help renewal unfold when the people of a congregation deeply desire a new and better life and are willing to do what it takes to get there. The hard part can be developing that desire. As long as life together is satisfactory, there is little impetus for change.

Over and over we hear congregations wishing that the people in the community would become active in their church. What drives that desire is revealed in their response to the question "Why?" Any time a significant number of people answer, "To keep our programs running and our doors open," we know that the congregation is in trouble. It has moved to the point at which the people beyond its doors are valued primarily for what they can bring to the church. People in the community are seen as the congregation's salvation, rather than the other way around.

Attempting to lure the new population group, the congregational leaders add programs and make changes they imagine will appeal to the people. Surprised and frustrated when their changes show little result, they redouble their efforts to find the right program. This work is misdirected. The congregation is not declining because the community around it has changed, or even primarily because the church's form of ministry and worship feels foreign to those in the neighborhood. The real and deeper issue is that the congregation has lost connection with a Christian church's basic mission: helping people experience God and connect with the gospel message of life and hope.

Declining congregations have lost connection with the Christian church's basic mission of helping people experience God and live the gospel message of life and

hope.

Without this sense of mission to keep the congregation focused beyond the doors of the church, the congregation turns inward and loses connection with its community. Before others will turn to a congregation as a life-giving resource in their lives, the congregation has to be a place that offers life. When traveling by plane, passengers are reminded that in the event of an emergency they should put on their own oxygen masks before helping others. In congregational renewal, a congregation reminds itself of and intentionally engages in the basic practices of Christianity. It realigns itself with the basic outward-focused mission of church.

Adapted from [Pathway to Renewal: Practical Steps for Congregations](#) by Daniel P. Smith and Mary K. Sellon, copyright ©

FALL SUNDAY SCHEDULE

On June 24th, Session and Staff discussed feedback from the congregation as well as our discernment process about visions and hopes for the future. Together, we adopted the following schedule for Sunday mornings, starting on **September 20th** (the week after Ingathering):

8:30	Contemplative Worship
9:30-10:15	Christian Education
10:10	Choir Rehearsal
10:30	Community Worship
11:30	Fellowship Time and New Members' Classes

Kathy Merkle-Raymond, Clerk (on behalf of Session)



CAREFUL! DOORS ARE BEING LEFT OPEN

If you use your key to enter any church building after working hours, please be sure that you lock up afterwards.

Paul Jones, Chair of Facilities

If you're reading this in a printed copy delivered to your home, there's an opportunity not only to save the church paper and postage costs but also for you to get more colorful and clear pictures of church activities. If you don't use a computer, we'll cheerfully bear the costs because we think it's important that you have access to church news, but if you do use a computer, will you consider emailing (oproctor@fprespa.org) or phoning (325-5659, X100) Oleta and asking that you be put on the email list? You'll get a much more attractive edition that you can print if you wish.

Lela Noble, Editor

Key Financial Highlights (Through June 30th)

Major Categories		Status (Rounded actual compared to prorated budget)
Pledge Income	☺	\$1,500 over budget
Congregational Giving	☺	\$3,000 over budget
Staff Compensation	☹	Right on budget
Administrative	☺	\$3,600 under budget
Facilities	☺	\$18,000 under budget
Social Justice	☹	\$16,000 under budget
Total Income	☺	\$3,000 over budget
Total Expenditures	☺	\$41,000 under budget
Income – Expenditures	☹	\$13,000 deficit (but ~ \$40,000 better than budget)

Financial Report Commentary

The church's finances continue to be better than we originally feared. Pledge income and overall congregational giving are both ahead of schedule. Many thanks to each of you who gives to the church, despite the difficult economy.

On the expense side, we still have significant "savings" as Facilities has had to spend very little so far on repairs and maintenance, and Social Justice has not spent much either. Session is working with the Social Justice Ministry over the next six weeks or so to come up with a revised spending plan for the year. The other committees and groups continue to show admirable restraint in their spending.

While we are doing much better than we expected, it is also important to keep in mind that we now have a sizeable deficit (from \$0 to -\$13,000 in one month) and still expect a much larger net deficit for the entire year.

Alec Henderson

First Pres August 2009 Calendar

www.fprensa.org/calendar.htm

Sun Aug 2, 2009

8:30am - 9:30am Contemplative Service, Chapel

Description: Worship service of reflection, sharing and singing in the style of Taizé.

10am - 11am Joint Worship Service at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 670 East Meadow, Palo Alto

Description: First Pres Community worship service with Covenant Presbyterian Church and First Baptist Church.

Wed Aug 5, 2009

2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 4, Kitchen and Fellowship Hall

Description: Volunteers cook, serve and clean up after dinner for our local homeless. Each team commits to serving in a five-week rotation schedule. Coordinator: Joy. Dinner is served at 5pm.

Fri Aug 7, 2009

6:30pm - 9pm Prime Timers Challenge Church Youth in Wii Championship, Fellowship Hall

Description: Come play or watch the Wii Sports competition between our youth and Prime Timers.

Sun Aug 9, 2009

8:30am - 9:30am Contemplative Service, Chapel

10am - 11am Joint Worship Service at First Pres, Sanctuary

Tue Aug 11, 2009

7pm - 9:30pm Super Tuesday, Fellowship Hall, Classrooms

Description: Planning meetings for our teaching, family and youth, community building, finance and facilities, and social justice ministries.

Wed Aug 12, 2009

2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 5, First Pres

Description: Coordinators Craig & Derrick. Dinner is served at 5pm.

7pm - 9:30pm Session Meeting, Classroom 1

Sun Aug 16, 2009

8:30am - 9:30am Contemplative Service, Chapel

10am - 11am Joint Worship Service at First Baptist Church, 205 North California Ave., Palo Alto

Wed Aug 19, 2009

2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 1, Beth Jacob

Description: Coordinator: Carol. Dinner is served at 5pm.

7pm - 8:30pm Deacons Meeting, Classroom 1

Thu Aug 20, 2009

10:30am - 12 pm Worship & Music Ministry Meeting, Pastor's Study

Sun Aug 23, 2009

8:30am - 9:30am Contemplative Service, Chapel

10am - 11am Community Worship Service, Sanctuary

11am - 12pm Celebration Party for Nan Swanson, Courtyard

Description: We will celebrate Nan and the many gifts and talents she has shared freely with all of us in her years as Pastor at First Pres. Please come to wish Nan and Rollin well as Nan transitions to retirement.

Wed Aug 26, 2009

2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 2, Vineyard Christian Fellowship

4:30pm First Pres Press Deadline

Description: Please send Press articles and news items to Lela Noble and Oleta Proctor-Fernandez

7pm - 9:30pm Session Meeting, Classroom 1

Sun Aug 30, 2009

8:30am - 9:30am Contemplative Service, Chapel

10am - 11am Community Worship Service, Sanctuary

11am - 1pm All-Church Picnic & Block Party on Cowper Street

Description: Games, Bounce House, Music, Plate Painting, and More!

First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto

1140 Cowper Street
Palo Alto, California
94301

We're on the Web!
www.fprespa.org



Our Mission Statement

The mission of First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto is to make our personal witness and public work consistent with the prophet Micah's challenge to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. As a community of faith, we center our communal life in worship and are challenged to live out the good news of the Gospel. Following Jesus the Christ, we pursue God's nonviolent vision of justice and human dignity for all people and share this understanding with our children, our members, our community, and the World.