

*The
Window*

First
Presbyterian
Church of
Santa Monica

March 2017

Lent

*A season for
reflection
and renewal*



Pastor's Pen

*But now thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.*

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

*I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise. [Isaiah 43:1, 19-20]*

None of us likes change. We first perceive it as loss. It can involve real grief. With God's help, we might move on to hope in the unfolding prospect of the sometimes big, often bold, but always beautiful new thing that God is about to do in our midst.

As I said in my February 8 letter to the congregation, Sherril and I have discerned that the new thing that God is doing in our midst is his calling us to the vocation of retirement. Our announcement has precipitated a host of reactions from you (reactions that we, too, share), from gladness for the goodness of what has been to grief at the looming loss that a pastoral transition necessitates. Some of you have graciously noted that the church is in a state of vibrant well-being; you have thanked us for our part in helping this to be the case. We thank you, too, for making it so! But we all must keep at the forefront of our perception that it is God who has been at work in our midst, in us and through us, occasionally in spite of us, but always with us and for us, blessing us in every way.

- We continue to be blessed with those whom we now call "persons in ordered ministry": ruling elders who serve with kindness, patience, faithfulness and good cheer, and deacons who serve with compassion, grace, and love.
- We have a wonderful, gifted staff that it has been my immense privilege to lead and work with over the years with collegial, mutually supportive camaraderie.
- Our worship is animated by the Spirit of the living Christ, working through gifted worship leaders who encourage us to sing and pray and offer praise to the living God.
- Our programs for the spiritual formation of children, youth and adults are propelling all of us along our shared journey of growth in the knowledge and experience of God in our midst.
- Together we deploy God-given gifts of time, talent and treasure as we give of ourselves through mission activities that honor and serve those in need.
- We have consistently been sustained as a church body by the generosity of our givers, as well as the faithful stewardship of those who manage what we have been given to the glory of God.
- And we have been blessed by the absence of damaging conflicts that can quickly rend asunder the goodness of what God consistently gives—that peaceful health and wholeness of a diverse community of believers, who don't always agree, but who love each other enough to disagree agreeably, and then, with God's help, find reserves of forbearance that foster the unity that is ours in Jesus Christ our Lord.

God has been doing all these new things in our midst already! But there are surely more to come. Sherril and I know that our decision now makes necessary a season of discernment for the good people of First Pres. The first of these is the session's selection of an Interim Pastor to provide pastoral leadership during the time of transition. The next is the work of a Pastor Nominating Team that will faithfully take the time it needs to recommend a nominee for the people of the church to choose as their next Pastor, in collaboration with the Presbytery of the Pacific. Because of who God is, coupled with who I know the people of First Pres to be, I have great confidence that the shared perception of the new thing that God is about to do will be clear and an abundance of good new things will spring forth in the days ahead.

So please know my heartfelt thanks—to you and to the God of grace, mercy and love—for all that has been, for all that is now, and for all that is yet to be!

Grace and peace,

Bill



March 2017 Calendar

March 1st

5:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Soup and Bread Supper, Renaissance Room
6:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship Service, Sanctuary

March 3rd

6:30 p.m. Vawters' Daughters, Renaissance Room

March 5th

11:15 a.m. Mariners Social, Conference Room
11:15 a.m. Lenten Devotions, Library

March 12th

11:15 a.m. Congregational Life Team Meeting, Conference Room
11:15 a.m. Mission Team Meeting, Library

March 18th

7:00 p.m. Youth Group – Laser Tag

March 18th

10:00 a.m. Saturday Worship Service (due to the LA Marathon on March 19th)

March 25th

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Women's Hike, Topanga State Park
8:00 p.m. Jacaranda Concert, Sanctuary

March 26th

3:00 p.m. Kaleidoscope Concert, Sanctuary
11:15 a.m. Lenten Devotions, Library

WINTER WEEKLY AT FIRST PRES

Wednesdays: 9:00 a.m. Wednesday Morning Gathering, Wictum Hall
12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Church Mice, Church Mice Room; C.E. Building
3:30 – 5:30 p.m. Youth Study Hall, Renaissance Room
5:30 – 6:00 p.m. Midweek Groups Dinner, Renaissance Room
6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Midweek Groups Activities
7:00 p.m. Yoga, Renaissance Room

Thursdays: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study, Library

Sundays: 10:00 a.m. Worship Service, Sanctuary

Time For Lent

Lenten Devotions

Don't just give up something-add something good to your Lenten journey!

A Way Other Than our Own-

Join with other First Pres participants in individual daily reading of Walter Brueggemann's book, *A Way Other Than Our Own: Devotions for Lent*.

We will come together on March 5, 26, and April 2 in the library from 11:15 a.m.-noon to discuss what we have read. Led by Dr. Wood and Peter Earhart. The book is available for \$8 (or for free, if the cost does not fit your budget!).

Meeting Jesus—This is a free Lenten Devotional from *Presbyterian Today* and is available in the narthex for all First Pres members and friends.

Children's, Youth, and Family Ministry

March 2017



YOUTH GROUP

March Events

March 18th – Laser Tag
Ultrazone in Sherman Oaks

If you have questions call or email
David at david@fpcsantamonica.org.

Sunday Faith Groups

Church Mice (Preschool – Kinder)

March 5 – *Jesus and the Samaritan woman*
March 12 – *Jesus refuses to cast stones*
March 19 – *Jesus raises Lazarus*
March 26 – *Mary anoints Jesus*

Faith Discovers (1st-2nd Grade).

Faith Explorers (3rd-5th Grade)

March 5 – *A boy shares his lunch*
March 12 – *Crowds welcome Jesus*
March 19 – *Jesus raises Lazarus*
March 26 – *A woman anoints Jesus*

Middle School Youth (6th-8th Grade)

High School Youth (9th-12th Grade)

March 5 – *Remain in Worship*
March 12 – *Blessed are the meek*
March 19 – *Blessed are those that hunger for righteousness*
March 26 – *Blessed are the merciful*

MIDWEEK FAITH GROUPS

Kids meet on Wednesdays for fellowship, games, and Bible study activities led by Peter Earhart, Irene Navarro, Paula Lowe, and David Derus

Church Mice (Preschool – Kinder)

12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.
Church Mice Room, C.E. Building

Faith Discoverers (1st-2nd Grade)

Faith Explorers (3rd-5th Grade)

5:30 p.m. Dinner in Ren Room
6:00 p.m. Meet for activities, Wictum Hall/Big Yard

Youth Group (Mid High and Sr. High)

3:30 p.m. Study Hall in Ren Room
5:30 p.m. Dinner in Ren Room
6:00 p.m. Meet for activities, Youth Lounge

Music Mentors Needed:

Can you read music? If so, youth handbells has a ministry opportunity for you. We are seeking a few individuals to help support our efforts in providing handbell music for special services. Previous handbell experience is not required, only an ability to read music. If interested, please contact Irene Navarro at: irene@fpcsantamonica.org.

The church season of Lent is one of the most important in the life of the Christian community. It is a period of forty days leading up to Easter (not including Sundays). It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on the Saturday before Easter. The color for this season is purple. Lent is a time of spiritual self-examination, reflecting on our lives as Christian believers and looking forward to Easter and the joy of the resurrection. It is also a special time for families to talk about what it means to be a Christian family and how being a Christian family affects how we act toward one another and toward others.

At the same time, it can be difficult to observe Lent with children. It is never easy to talk about our shortcomings, i.e. our sins, with our children. It is never easy to admit that we don't always live up to our commitments as followers of Jesus Christ. Yet this is exactly what we need to do during Lent. It is fashionable to talk about "giving up" something for lent, like chocolate or some other luxury item. But Lent is much more about identifying and giving up those things that get in the way of our relationship with God. Our journey through these forty days of Lent should be a movement ever closer to Jesus and to the way of life he has exemplified for us.

So how do we teach our children about Lent? One way to approach it is to talk about Lent as a special time when we grow and change. Pull out a family photo album or online family picture display and talk about how your child has changed from the time they were born to the present day. Then make the observation that in the same way that people grow and change on the outside, i.e. their physical features, during Lent we grow and change on the inside. And we can grow in many ways, like reading the Bible, attending worship, and helping others.

There are many opportunities for you and your family to participate in special activities during Lent.

1. Ash Wednesday Supper and Worship: On Wednesday, March 1, you are invited to a special soup supper at 5:30 p.m. at the church followed by a short worship service at 6:30 p.m., where communion and the imposition of ashes will take place.
2. Lenten Devotional Book and Calendars: ***A Way Other Than Our Own*** is a book of Lenten devotions available from the church for a suggested donation of \$8. ***Meeting Jesus*** is a free devotional Lent calendar that you can pick up in the narthex. ***We Celebrate Lent*** is a Lent calendar for children and families, also available in the narthex.
3. Upward Bound House's Adopt-A-Unit Project: During Lent, Children's and Family Ministry will once again be collecting items to furnish an apartment at UBH's Family Place, which provides transitional housing for homeless families.
4. One Great Hour of Sharing Fish Coin Boxes: During Lent, you are invited to participate in this special offering that supports Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and the Self Development of Peoples. Families are asked to put some change in the coin boxes at home each day or week of Lent and bring the fish coin boxes back to be collected on Palm Sunday.

My prayer for you and your family this Lenten season is that you may be blessed with new and enlivening spiritual growth and meaningful preparation for our Easter celebration.

In Christ,



Happenings at First Pres

"Share The Love" – CHILDREN'S LENTEN MISSION PROJECT

This year, Children's and Family Ministry has once again designated our Lenten "Share The Love" mission project to go to Upward Bound House, a leading provider of housing and services to homeless families with children under the age of 18. Family Place, located in Santa Monica, consists of 21 one-bedroom apartments designed to accommodate a family of up to four members for 3 to 6 months. Through "Share The Love", we are asking all First Pres members and friends to help us collect items that will go toward furnishing an apartment in Family Place for a new family. We will keep a list of items that have been donated on an easel board in the narthex as well as on the First Pres website so that you will know what we have and what we still need to collect. I hope that you will take the opportunity to participate in our Lent mission project as you are able. We are excited about making mission a part of our Lenten disciplines.

Women's Hike – Topanga State Park

Congregational Life is hosting a Prayer Walk on Saturday, March 25 from 3-5 p.m. Join the women of the church for a guided hike in Topanga State Park. 1-mile loop is easy/moderate but there will be an alternate activity that is accessible to all. The hike will be followed with fellowship at the home of Kathy Stickel. Please RSVP by March 17 for this event for planning purposes.



The

Thank you Noah - We will miss you!

We can't believe it's been nine years of wonderful music and fellowship. God's blessings and our great thanks.



FIRST PRES COMMUNITY

Wednesday Morning Gathering

If you like to crochet, knit, work on crafts or just visit, we would love to have you join us on Wednesday mornings at our gathering. We meet at 9:00 a.m. and have coffee at 10:00 a.m. We work on our projects and try to solve the problems of the world. Hope to see some new faces this year!

Bible Study

Romans—Paul's Magnum Opus of Hope, Joy, and Peace, Join Dr. Wood as we delve into the apostle Paul's great work proclaiming the hope-filled good news of God in the Spirit of the living Christ, 9:30 a.m., Thursdays, in the library.

Mariners Social

Mariners socials include lunch, entertainment, and informative presentations year round. This group meets one Sunday a month following the church service.

Sunday, March 5, 11:15 a.m.

The Mariners will meet in the Conference Room at 11:15 a.m. for pizza and salad. At 12:00 p.m. there will be a 30-minute video on the Noah's Ark Fact or Fiction, which will prove evidence of real findings of the event in history. You don't want to miss this interesting video. Donations will be accepted for the pizza and salad lunch. Please contact Diane Henszey at 310.470.2536 or the church office to RSVP.

Vawters' Daughters

Join the women of the congregation the first Friday of every month. In honor of those spunky sisters who played such a vital role in the history of the church, we are the **Vawters' Daughters**. Contact the church for more details.

Flowers

They beautify our sanctuary, honor your loved ones and provide cheer to our hospitalized and homebound parishioners. The deacons divide each week's arrangement into two or three bouquets and deliver them to members who can't get to church because of illness or frailty. It keeps our "friends at home" connected to their church family in a meaningful way.

We also can put to good use any vases that may be taking up space in your cupboards at home. If you'd like to reserve a date please see Pat Alston during the coffee hour or call the church office 310.451.1303. The cost of the flowers is \$65.

Greeters Welcome You

The Price Is Right. Do you know the TV show that gives you prizes if you know the correct price of an item? It's fun to guess along with the guest, isn't it? Today, we want you to know that this place is right. You don't have to know anything except that God loves you and so do we. We greet you and give you a warm welcome because we are happy that you are here. Please join us in fellowship and worship. You are invited to be a part of the Greeter ministry; call the church office or contact Carole Riggs at ccriggs@hotmail.com.

Westside Food Bank

The Westside Food Bank provides immediate hunger relief to the people of our community. Bring your donations of cash and checks payable to First Presbyterian Church with Westside Food Bank in the "memo" line to church the first Sunday of every month. Canned food and durable goods are also welcome, but donations of cash or check are preferred, as the Westside Food Bank multiplies these donations tenfold through its bulk buying power. A list of needed food items is available. Call the church office for more information.

Need a Ride to Church?

If you are in need of a ride to church, our van driver, Tyrone DuBose has been providing transportation to First Pres members and friends for thirty-four years. He will make sure you get to church on time and in style in the First Pres van, and take you back home after the service. To schedule a ride call Tyrone directly at 310.920.0410.

Hatha Yoga

Join us for yoga in a supportive relaxing atmosphere! Knowledgeable, trained, innovative teacher. Bring water and a mat to the Renaissance Room, Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. The suggested donation is \$25 per month. Questions? Call the church office 310.451.1303.

March Birthdays

March 1 Isabella Wilson
March 1 Sue Hall
March 3 Kathy Stickel
March 5 Carolyn Nuban
March 5 Daniella Wilson
March 9 Doug McIver
March 11 Colin Hou
March 11 James Watt
March 11 Mark Yung
March 13 Jack Hyde-White
March 16 J.D. Harber
March 18 Luke Tarsitano
March 18 Geraldine Webb
March 19 Manfredo Grellert
March 20 Carole Horowitz
March 23 Kent Lewis
March 26 Madison Bristol
March 27 Landon Ullrich
March 29 Pat Alston
March 29 Catherine Hou
March 30 Patrick Chiang
March 30 Mike Hassen
March 31 Nikki Cross-Patrick



Concerts



Sunday, March 26, 2017 – 3:00 p.m.

Darius Milhaud – *La Création du monde*
Francis Poulenc – *Sextet*
Gernot Wolfgang – *New England Travelogue*
(west coast premiere)
Nick Omiccioli – *Fuse* (west coast premiere)



Saturday, March 25, 2017 – 8:00 p.m.

TRANSCENDENTAL CALL
Oliver Messiaen: *Interstellar Call*
Franz Liszt: *Transcendental Etudes*
Artists: Steven Vanhauwaert, piano; Allen Vogel, horn



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1220 Second Street
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SUBMISSIONS:
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