

The Window

First
Presbyterian
Church of
Santa Monica

April 2017

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 9th
Worship Service, 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 13th
Communion with Tennebrae
7:00 p.m.

Good Friday, April 14th
Community Service hosted by
Brentwood Presbyterian Church
12:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 16th
Worship Service, 10:00 a.m.
Easter Egg Hunt following worship



Resurrection

Our Lenten journey inexorably takes us toward Golgotha, the place of crucifixion. The great good news is: our journey doesn't end there. Real death gets transformed into real resurrection on the first Easter morning. Even with two thousand years of historical distance, it is still hard for us to get our heads around what really happened. Imagine what it must have been like for those for whom it all happened in real time.

Matthew, the Gospel-writer, says that on the day after Jesus died:

The chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first."

"You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone."

Author and Presbyterian minister Frederick Buechner continues the telling of the story:

When whatever it was that happened that night had happened, the guardsmen came racing back from the tomb to say that it was empty. According to Matthew, the chief priests and the Pharisees bribed them to spread the rumor that the disciples had stolen the corpse under cover of darkness. Pocketing the cash, the soldiers did as they were told, and "this story," Matthew concludes, "has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day."

If this story was a lie, then what was the truth? ... In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John no story is told of how the body of Jesus disappeared from the tomb. All that is said is that by the time the women got there, the stone had been rolled back and it was empty. What followed was chaos—dim figures flickering through the dawn, voices calling out, the sound of running feet. When the women got back to Jerusalem and gasped it all out to the disciples, Luke says that the disciples considered their words "an idle tale, and they did not believe them."

The earliest reference to the resurrection is Saint Paul's, and he makes no mention of an empty tomb at all. But the fact of the matter is that in a way it hardly matters how the body of Jesus came to be missing because in the last analysis what convinced the people that he had risen from the dead was not the absence of his corpse but his living presence. And so it has been ever since."¹

Real death transformed into real resurrection. The empty tomb transformed into the presence of the living Christ, who appeared to his followers, broke bread with them, conversed with them, responded to their many questions, and reassured them that he is not dead but alive and will be so forever.

The cross and the resurrection together comprise a single reality that radiates the powerful lovingkindness of God for us all. Let us rejoice this Easter in this great truth.

Grace and peace,

Bill



¹ Frederick Buechner, *The Faces of Jesus*, New York:Stearn Publishers Limited and San Francisco:Harper & Row, p. 217.

April 2017 Calendar

April 2nd

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

April 7th

6:30 p.m. Vawters' Daughters, Off-site

April 9th

10:00 a.m. Palm Sunday Service, Sanctuary
11:15 a.m. Congregational Life Team Meeting, Conference Room
11:15 a.m. Mission Team Meeting, Work Room
11:15 a.m. Deacons Team Meeting, Library

April 13th

7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service, Sanctuary

April 14th

12:00 p.m. Good Friday Community Service, Brentwood Presbyterian Church

April 16th

10:00 a.m. Easter Sunday Service, Sanctuary
11:15 a.m. Children's Easter Egg Hunt, Big and Small Yards

April 23rd

11:00 a.m. Make-a-wich, Renaissance Room

April 29th

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Youth Group – Renaissance Faire

April 30th

3:00 p.m. Kaleidoscope Concert, Sanctuary

SPRING 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

Come, Christians, Join to Sing!

The Congressional Life team invites your suggestions for this year's annual Hymn Sing, which will take place on May 28. Along with your suggestion, please include a few words about what the music means to you or a memory of when you sang (or heard) it.

Use the back of the welcome card to send your suggestions or email them to shelly@fpcsantamonica.org.

Children's, Youth, and Family Ministry

April 2017

SPRING BREAK

Midweek Faith Groups will not meet on April 5th or on April 12th.

Please join us for the Palm Sunday Procession on Sunday, April 9th and the Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 16th.

YOUTH GROUP

April Events

April 29th – Renaissance Faire
9:00 am – 5:00 p.m.
15501 E. Arrowhead Hwy
Irwindale, CA

We will depart from the church. The cost is \$50. Please RSVP by April 23.

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

Sunday Faith Groups

Church Mice (Preschool – Kinder)

April 2 – *The Last Supper*
April 9 – *Jesus' arrest and death*
April 16 – *Jesus is risen!*
April 23 – *God hears Hagar and Ishmael*
April 30 – *Moses is born*

Faith Discovers (1st-2nd Grade).

Faith Explorers (3rd-5th Grade)

April 2 – *The Last Supper*
April 9 – *Jesus dies on a cross*
April 16 – *Jesus is risen!*
April 23 – *Isaac and the wells*
April 30 – *Abigail*

Middle School Youth (6th-8th Grade)

High School Youth (9th-12th Grade)

April 2 – *Remain in Worship*
April 9 – *Sermon on the Mount: Salt and Light*
April 16 – *Remain in Worship*
April 23 – *Sermon on the Mount: Completion of the Law*
April 30 – *Sermon on the Mount: Anger and Violence*

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



How Do I Explain Easter to My Children (or Grandchildren)?

A good starting point is to realize that Easter is bigger than any of us ever fully understand so we do not have to know all the answers. No one ever does. Easter is new life, an empty tomb, forgiveness, resurrection, and more. That is not something to understand. It is a reality we have to grow into. The truth is that we understand different aspects of Easter better at different times of our lives.

Adults respond enthusiastically to the Easter claim and promise of victory over death because adults understand the finality of death and fear death. Children, however, have a hard time grasping the reality, especially the finality, of death. Even after attending Grandpa's funeral, a young child will often ask, at unexpected times, when Grandpa will be visiting. This natural inability to grasp the finality of death is supported by fairy tale princesses who awake after "sleeping" for years and cartoon characters who, flattened by steamrollers, peel themselves off the road. Given all this, it's not surprising that children can't get too excited by victory over death.

Many books and people try to get around this by focusing on new life, paying attention to eggs, bulbs, and butterflies as new life symbols. While children are vaguely interested in these symbols, "new life" strikes few of them (for whom all of life is "new") as particularly significant or exciting.

Instead, for younger children, the empty tomb is the ultimate victory of the good guys (God/Jesus) over the bad guys (Judas, the priests, Pilate, the soldiers). On Good Friday the bad guys thought they had won. They killed Jesus and sealed his body into a guarded tomb. On Easter morning God/Jesus blasted right out of that tomb and proved once and for all that God is more powerful than even the worst evil the worst bad guys can inflict. The natural response to such a victory is to yell "Hooray for God and Jesus!" and to celebrate belonging to God who is the most powerful power there is in the universe!

To older elementary children, who are focused on friendships and have clear expectations of "best friends," the most significant resurrection story is the story of Peter's breakfast conversation with Jesus (see John 21:1-19). Peter had been Jesus' best friend. He had promised to stick with Jesus no matter what. And he had been caught three times on the same night pretending he did not even know Jesus. As a betrayed "best friend," Jesus would have been justified in ignoring or punishing Peter for his denials. But Jesus did not. For Peter, the resurrection happened when Jesus forgave him, welcomed him back as a friend, and put him to work building God's Kingdom. For older children, Easter holds the promise that Jesus will forgive them and welcome them back when/if they betray their friendship with him. Such Easter forgiveness is worth celebrating!

And remember the starting point - Easter is bigger than we can understand. We don't have to know all the answers. We probably do most harm when we fail to talk with our children about our Easter faith out of fear that we will not get it right.

In Christ,



Happenings at First Pres

“BACKPACKS WITH A HEART” – Thank you from the Presbytery of the Pacific



The Presbytery of the Pacific deeply appreciates your donation of backpacks for our “Backpacks from the Heart” drive in February to welcome recent arrivals of unaccompanied minor children fleeing violence from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala in Central America. Thank you for contributing so generously to this effort!

We received a tremendous outpouring of support from churches in our Presbytery for the drive. Twenty churches donated 300 backpacks, exceeding our original goal of 200! In each backpack was a note of blessing from the Presbyterian churches in Los Angeles.

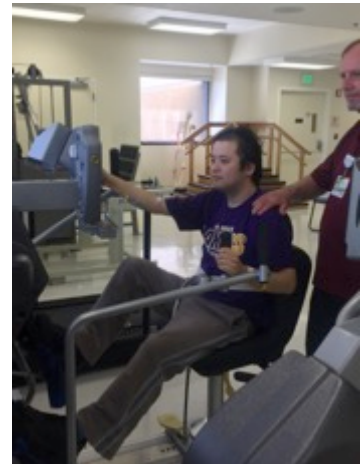
CHIEN-WEI LU, FPCSM USHER: GETTING STRONGER, SHARING HIS GIFTS

From Shu-Hwei and Hamilton Lu about the progress of their older son – and our beloved First Pres usher – Chien-Wei Lu, who suffered a brain bleed in mid-February. “Wei-Wei,” as he is known to his adoring parents, is now receiving extensive physical and occupational therapy at Northridge Hospital Medical Center:

Thanks for the prayers from all of you.

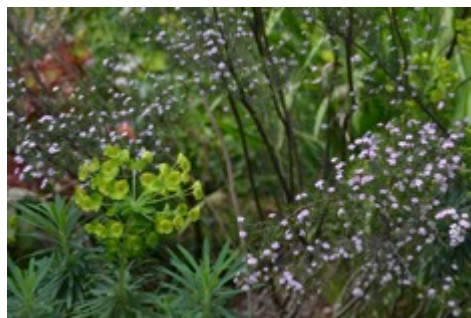
Wei-Wei is getting better every day. He is learning to walk without a cane or walker. His legs are still weak, but he can use his arms to play with the Chinese Yo-Yo for a few minutes at a time. His math is not good now, but his English seems to have improved a lot. 😊 He’s teaching many people American Sign Language in the hospital, which makes him very happy.

Please keep praying for our family. Thank you!



WOMEN’S PRAYER HIKE

On Saturday, March 25, a small group of women participated in a wonderful prayer hike in Topanga State Park. The event was planned and hosted by Kathy Stickel. The weather was perfect and the women enjoyed a lovely one-mile hike followed by appetizers and fellowship at Kathy’s house.



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, April 2, 11:15 a.m.

The Mariners will meet in the Renaissance Room at 11:15 a.m. for a musical program by Steve Fry and Jan. They will present familiar songs of praise, hymns, and gospel tunes. Everyone can join. Party platters and cookies will be served for donations. 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.

April Birthdays

April 1 Trey Barton
April 1 Jan Khoe
April 2 Jessica Matkovic
April 2 Lawrence Rhee
April 4 Cash Luteman
April 7 Bart Olds
April 9 Megan Stuempfig
April 10 Evelyn Hou
April 10 Lucas Smith
April 11 Craig Schleicher
April 12 Richard Horowitz
April 13 Olivia Larson
April 13 Christie Masters

April 15 Jonathan Forsander
April 15 Pearl Zadeh
April 16 Rian Dourado
April 17 Louis Yansen
April 18 Laura Heimbald
April 18 Kim Khoe
April 19 Allison Riley
April 20 Mason Earhart
April 25 Wendy Grellert
April 26 Griffin Kazanegras
April 26 Gabriel Lopez
April 28 Anna Clara Grellert
April 30 Elliot Newman



Concerts

Sunday, April 30, 2017 – 3:00 p.m.

Will Healy – *Kolmanskop* (west coast premiere)
Steven Stucky – *Partita-Pastorale after J.S.B.*
Sergei Prokofiev – *Symphony No. 5*



PUBLISHER:
First Presbyterian Church of
Santa Monica

1220 Second Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401

SUBMISSIONS:
Send newsworthy information
about church activities for
consideration in the *Window*
to info@fpcsantamonica.org.