

## Our Mission Study

### *the Next Step in the Search for a New Permanent Pastor*

As most of us are aware, our church is between permanent pastors. Pastor Toby is our Interim Pastor, and he is not eligible to be FPCC's permanent Pastor. In addition to standard pastor responsibilities, interim pastors must also prepare the congregation for their next permanent pastor. Another important part of Pastor Toby's job is to ensure our leadership is prepared to successfully work through the process of searching for and calling a new permanent pastor to FPCC. Accordingly, Pastor Toby's contract has just been extended for an additional six months. If needed, the contract can be further extended, subject to agreement by all parties (Pastor Toby, Session, and Presbytery).

The initial part of the process to find a new pastor requires that we conduct a Mission Study and prepare a Mission Study Report and a Mission Statement. That task falls to the Mission Study Team (MST). Their job is to collect and analyze information (church and community demographics, congregational and financial health, and church ministries, programs, and activities), and to engage the congregation in a time

of reflection and vision casting. The MST then prepares a summary report that provides a sense of where the congregation has been, is currently, and would like to be in five to ten years. The MST also composes a Mission Statement that will provide direction for our church's journey as a Christian congregation over the next five to ten year period.

The Mission Study Report and Mission Statement are important because they inform the future Pastor Nominating Committee and prospective applicants, and guide the envisioned mission of our congregation. It is Session's responsibility to form the Mission Study Team and name its chair. Following Presbytery's guidelines, and after prayerful consideration, Session selected the following people to serve on the Team: **David Dowell, Susan Koester, Darryl McCollum, Jon Myers, and David Stearns**. David Dowell was chosen to chair the Team.

The Mission Study will include the following:

1. Membership and history of the congregation
2. A financial and statistical review

3. A demographic analysis of the community and of the Church
4. A thorough review of the Church's mission, vision and goals

The Study requires significant involvement and input by members of the congregation, and some of you have already participated in meetings and surveys with members of the MST regarding your perceptions and vision for our Church. There will be an additional opportunity for the congregation to participate during a special Sunday School hour on April 9, 2017. When completed, the Mission Study must be approved by Session and by Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, and be presented to the congregation. Once approved by the Committee on Ministry, we will be able to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee.

Please pray for our Mission Study Team as they carry out this important work. The Team will keep the congregation informed through future articles and announcements. If there are any questions, members of the congregation are encouraged to contact anyone on the MST.



### New Logo

Our new logo (above), was created by Kristin Harvey and approved for use by Session at their last meeting. You will recognize the familiar front of our sanctuary, with the roof line and the stained glass cross. First Press is jumping the gun just a bit with this, and are planning a full roll-out soon. The logo symbolizes a refreshing of the image of the church for the next generation of believers and a re-invigoration of the FPCC's mission.

## How's Your Prayer Life

by Rebecca Chase

Have you prayed today? Sometime this week...? Are you not sure what it means to pray? Who's going to know if you have prayed or not? Why does it matter, anyway...?

Look at these places in the Bible when Jesus taught on prayer:

- Luke 18:1-7 – We should always pray and not give up.
- Luke 11:1-13 – Teachings on prayer including The Lord's Prayer, a parable of a friend at midnight, and how much more our Father will give us than we give to our children.
- Matthew 6:5-15 – Sermon on the Mount, focusing on motives for prayer.
- Matthew 7:7-12 – Ask, seek, knock.
- Matthew 9: 37-38 – Ask the Lord of the harvest for workers of the harvest.

*"It becomes evident that prayer for Jesus was not a side issue. It was not just a good spiritual exercise. Nor was it something you do when nothing else works. Prayer was central to who He was and what He did. He was going to pray, as well as teach His disciples to pray, throughout His ministry. And His final words from the cross would be a prayer! E.M. Bounds reminds us that 'we can do nothing without prayer. All things can be done by importunate prayer. That is the teaching of Jesus Christ.'" (David Butts, "Forgotten Power: A Simple Theology for a Praying Church", p. 25).*

If we are to move forward on this corner of the Kingdom, we need to constantly and consistently be asking for guidance.

"Importunate" means "persistent, especially to the point of annoyance or intrusion." Keep on praying, and pray fervently. Being at one with God's plan only happens when we all pray to know His will, together.

Here are some other opportunities to pray in the church community:

- The Prayer Room – Help us by assisting in clearing out items being "stored". We need to reclaim our special prayer place.
- Communion Sunday prayer teams (starting 4/2) – Come and ask Jesus for what you need after you take the bread and cup.
- Todos Santos Plaza – Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> – Booth in the Farmer's Market. "What would you like Jesus to do for you today?" This will be repeated. Watch Family News for information.
- Good Friday – Pray anytime from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm in the Chapel.

May God bless our church, our community, our leaders, and our nation. May God continue to bless us with the ability to serve our neighbors. In Jesus' name.

*Rebecca Chase, Director of  
Community Care*



### Healing Prayer Seminar Yes! There were Healings!

An incredible, faith-filled team from Sierra Ministries International, from Nevada City, CA came to First Pres Concord on February 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> for training

us in the AUTHORITY TO HEAL Seminar. About 65 people attended. SMI brought a team of 15 people with them to act as coaches, trainers, and encouragers. FPCC had a total of nine "captains" who functioned as leaders in a small group to administer healing ministry.



We discovered that the training we were receiving was not for healing 'prayer' but for healing 'ministry'. Prayer is talking to God, to Jesus. The healing ministry has a whole different focus. We pray for God to use us, then we command in ministry to the pain, the muscle, the blood, whatever the person asked to be healed, in Jesus' name.

The Rev Dan Prout presented us with a very thorough Biblical foundation to all the ministry we would be learning. We had a total of three lectures or illustrations, and 3 opportunities to practice healing ministry with our coach. We also enjoyed a sandwich buffet for lunch, when we could meet some of the participants, some who had come from as far as Bakersfield and Susanville.

According to April James, from SMI, we had nine groups giving

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## Healing Prayer Seminar (continued)

ministry three times, with a couple of repeats, making 25 receiving ministry. Of those, 23 reported something ranging from tingling, peace, love, Lord's presence, gratitude, warmth, relaxation, comfort, hope, or pain improvement by two or three levels, yet not full relief.

Enjoy and praise God for the following testimonies:

*I had pain from a double hip replacement. After I received healing prayer from the team the pain went away and I can stand up straight. ~ Virdie*

*I have right hip degeneration, acute pain in my groin, lower back, and right pinching nerve pain down right leg. Physical therapist feels I may need right hip replacement and doctor wants to continue spinal pain blocks. Hip pain at level eight. After team prayed for me there was no more pain in right knee that was replaced in 2016. No longer have*

*sharp hip pain, pain reduced to about a five. The lower right back pain subsided. ~ Gale*

*I wanted prayer for bone spur and arthritis in foot, rotator cuff tear and arthritis in shoulder, and golfers elbow. During ministry my heel pain reduced from six to zero. I can now stand and walk without pain. I can move my arm more freely without pain and a greater range of motion. Elbow pain lessened. ~ Heather*

*I was experiencing pain in my right knee and right shoulder. When I was prayed for I felt warmth spreading, tingles and joy. The pain in my knee and shoulder diminished. ~ Kathryn*

*I deal with asthma in sinuses and throat 24/7 (problems with mucus), and arthritis in shoulder and middle of back - with pain in the back. As healing team ministered I felt heat and tingling in my back and swelling going down. I experienced tingling in my*

*sinuses and throat clearing out the mucus. I now have no pain in my back. I'm breathing better through my sinuses and throat. ~ Diane*

*My digestive track is not digesting food or absorbing nutrients, I have hypothyroid HBD, and degenerative disk disease in neck and lumbar. Since prayer my neck is better, rotation is good and no pain right now. I was released from the spirit of bitterness. ~ Sandra*

*I have primary asthma and COPD. The team was warm and welcoming. Since they prayed for me I'm on fire, my feet have moved more than ever before. The Lord took away my asthma and I was able to sing for the first time in years. ~ Katy*

For more information on SMI or to find the next seminar, go to <http://www.sierraministries.org/>.

†



## Great Commission

### Susan Koester in El Salvador



What is it that draws me to El Salvador for the sixth time in ten years? Is it the fact that houses' colors are vibrant, or that pupusas (traditional Salvadoran dish made of a thick handmade corn tortilla) melt in your mouth? No, it is because El Salvadorans' hearts are warm and full of love. In February, I had the opportunity to work at *Ministerio Cristiano Internacional Para Sordos* (International Christian Ministry for the Deaf) as well as visit with three of my sponsored Compassion children.

The week that I taught Vacation Bible School (VBS) at the Deaf School, there were four 5-year-old boys attending. Despite the fact that two of them just got started the prior week in school, they already knew many signs such as Good, Bad, Yes, No, Snack, Drink, Recess, Stand in Line, March, and many other words. While I told the story about the Prodigal Son in English, the children were watching Teacher Anny and Principal Ana act out the story using Spanish and sign languages. The boys had fun signing and singing "Jesus loves me, This I know", doing crafts, like cutting out and building three hanging hearts where they wrote "God", "Family" and "Me" on their respective hearts, coloring a Prodigal Son picture (in the exact

same colors that Teacher Susan had used), and other projects. Recess was fun with new toys to play with. I was told that one of the boys, Luis, put on his backpack and was all ready to go to school on Saturday! What a sad boy he was when he found out that he would have to wait until Monday. Truly this school is providing comprehensive care and development for the hearing impaired in San Salvador.

What a blessing it was for me to meet my sponsored Compassion children, Jocelyn, Emely and Margarita. I have known Jocelyn and Emely for nearly nine years, but Margarita for only four months. Compassion arranged the outings I had with each of the girls – go to the project and to see the child's home (provided it was safe to do so); review the child's Compassion records; learn more about the child's hopes and dreams; do an activity together; eat at a local restaurant; exchange gifts; and do a closing prayer. Through the translator, I was able to catch up with the girls about their lives: talk with the project representative about the child's school work; give encouragement to the parent, as well as share a bit about my life with them. It was so much fun for me to sit around a circle and have a conversation with these loving individuals. Compassion International, a Christian child advocacy ministry, provides children with health services, educational assistance, supplemental food, and spiritual opportunities to know Jesus. In a world where over a billion children live on less than \$2 U.S. per day, Compassion helps more than 1.5 million children in 25 countries. Visit [compassion.com](http://compassion.com)

to sponsor a child and release him/her from their spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty in Jesus' name. You will give them a future and a hope through the loving intervention of a Christ-centered program run by a church in their neighborhood. For more information, contact **Susan Koester** at 827-8959.

### Homeless Dinner at Concord Shelter

"Many hands make light work!" Every time there is a 5<sup>th</sup> Saturday of a month our church provides a meal for the 100 or so people who stay at the Concord Singles Homeless Shelter. It is a big undertaking, and it takes many people to make this a successful endeavor. We need contributions of food, helpers in the kitchen for preparations and several servers at the shelter. This is one way we can be the hands and heart of Jesus. There will be sign ups in the Fellowship hall in April. Please think about what you can do to help, and sign up or call **Ann Johnson**, 676-4330.

### How You Can Help Co-host at Winter Nights Shelter

An article on Winter Nights Shelter last issue gave details on this program where churches in central and east Contra Costa County host homeless families with children during the cold months, October through April. First Presbyterian Concord has helped co-host at other churches for 5 years. This year we need volunteers to help at St Andrews Presbyterian in Pleasant Hill April 29 to May 1. We will be providing

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## Great Commission (continued)

breakfast and lunch on Saturday and all three meals on Sunday. We will need food preparation, servers and clean up for all meals. We also will provide someone to stay overnight Saturday and/or Sunday nights (a Shelter requirement to have a church representative on site). We'd like to have a couple of people available on site between meals to act as hosts, visiting with any guests that are there during the day. There will be sign-ups on April 9 and 23 for volunteers. Stop by also if you have ideas for activities on Saturday and Sunday afternoon. More information is available at the Winter Nights Shelter website, and articles featuring Winter Nights Shelter in the East Bay Times for both 2016 and 2017 seasons appear in a Google Search. You may also call **Maren Stanczak** at 408-5930 if you have questions.

### More of our Missionaries are Coming to Visit - Save the Dates!

7/23 – Bill and Nona Baker will be sharing about their work with the Gypsy community in Slovakia.

7/30 (or 8/13) – Tim and Kirsten J\* will be sharing about their work producing videos in Arabic and Spanish so nonbelievers can learn more about Christ. (*\*Name withheld to protect them.*)

TBD – details about Christy Reiners' visit will come at a later date

Be sure to plan on attending the 11:00am Sunday School hour on the dates above to hear more about these missionaries and their work, and watch the Sunday Bulletin for information on Christy's visit!



### Uganda Tea Fundraiser



On **Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup>** at 11:00am-1:00pm the Uganda team will be hosting a tea brunch to raise money for the summer mission trip to Raise the Roof Academy in Uganda. All are welcome to come and enjoy a brunch with your favorite tea time foods: scones, sandwiches, quiche, fruit, and tea.

Tickets are \$10 per person. Tickets will go on sale during coffee time on Sunday April 23<sup>rd</sup>. You can also purchase them in the church office during the week, or contact **Robin Stearns** at 685-7916 or [RobinLStearns@msn.com](mailto:RobinLStearns@msn.com).

The Uganda team needs volunteers to help make the Uganda Tea a success. If you are interested in helping in any way, please contact **Robin Stearns** at 685-7916 (available after 6:00pm) or by e-mail at [RobinLStearns@msn.com](mailto:RobinLStearns@msn.com). Here are the volunteers we are looking for:

- 15 people to sponsor a table. Sponsorship means you would set up the table with a place setting and decorations.
- 10 servers
- 4 musicians (pianist, flutist, or someone who plays a stringed instrument) to play soft, relaxing music while the ladies enjoy the brunch
- Bakers – We will need about 18 dozen scones to host this event and any help we can get we will appreciate.
- Food Donations – We are looking for donations of bread, jam, cream cheese, cucumbers, canned chicken, eggs, lemons, mayonnaise, celery, carrots, fruit and dried cranberries. †

### Praise in the Park is Coming!

On July 15<sup>th</sup> from noon to 9pm, Todos Santos Park will become a center of Ecumenical worship and service to the community.

The mission and vision of Praise in the Park Concord are as follows:

**Mission** – Encourage Ecumenical Faith Based Community Building

**Vision** – Community of Faith partnering with non-profits to strengthen our valley and grow the Kingdom.

**Value Statement** – Lifting God's music in a day of inspired worship, we unite God's people around the principles of Faith (in God), Love (for all), and Service (to our community). We believe by releasing God's music into the atmosphere of our valley, He will use it to effect positive change where we live, work, and play.

There will be a dozen local worship teams and Christian Artists from noon to 7:30pm, when the headliner **Citizen Way** will take the stage to lead our community in Praise to the King. This annual FREE Christian Event in downtown is possible because of the logistical leadership of our church. For that, Praise in the Park is very grateful. 72 Churches from a dozen cities were represented in the attendance last year when over 4,000 Christians filled the park to hear Grammy Award Winning Artist Mandisa.

If uniting God's Kingdom in the purpose of Service is something you support – please join us on 7/15.

Volunteer opportunities are available and we will be forming FPCC prayer teams for anyone interested.

For further information or how to donate please contact **Darryl McCollum** (925) 681-8451. †

## Music & Worship News

by Paul Ferris

Dear FPCC family,

As I write this we are entering the fourth week of Lent. We began Lent with a Taize' candle-lit service in the chapel that was quite well attended and seemed well received.

### Sanctuary Update

If you haven't been in church recently you may have missed the changes. A few months ago we removed a couple of pews in order to improve traffic flow and to encourage people to sit up closer to the front. Since then we have been working to install large TV screens in the front and sides. The installation is now complete, slightly under budget, and we are starting to fire them up. We hope to have them fully operational by Easter.

### Tech

We have a new sound man. Mike Marin has stepped up and taken responsibility for running sound

on Sunday mornings. Clayton Worsdell is temporarily taking care of the video recording duties. We have a critical shortage of person-power on this team. A couple of people have expressed interest and done some training, but at the same time three people have rotated off the team. It's not a sustainable situation. Please consider joining this important team.

### Sound System

I have been spending a lot of time working on the sound system in the sanctuary, trying to make it more user friendly and reliable. Little by little I am wrestling that multi-headed monster to the ground.

### Spring Concert

The choir will have a spring concert in Mid-June. Stay tuned for details.

*Paul Ferris*

*Director of Music & Worship*



## Deacon News

By Deacon Moderator Wayne Matzen

Thank you to everyone for your patience with the deacons, and particularly me, as we are getting organized this year. We have reorganized the parishes to the current level of 12 and have moved some members to different parishes, which we have tried to organize geographically. If you need help from your deacon and don't know who that is, please call

Ann Keirns in the church office and she can look it up for you.

We are planning our All Parish Luncheon for May 21<sup>st</sup> at 12:00 noon in the Fellowship Hall. Each deacon will host a table for their parishioners, with lunch and desserts provided. You will be receiving an invitation from your deacon shortly. We hope you can join us.

### Holy Week Schedule

#### Maundy Thursday – April 13

On Maundy Thursday we celebrate Jesus' "Last Supper". A simple supper will be provided at 5:30pm before the service. We will be serving soup, fruit and dessert. Take this opportunity to join our First Press Family for food and fellowship! You may sign up in the fellowship hall after worship service or just come! The meal is free, but there will be a free-will offering at the dinner. The worship service will be at 7:00pm in the sanctuary.

#### Good Friday – April 14

From 12:00 noon until 3:00 pm the Chapel will be open for prayer and meditation.

#### Easter Sunday – April 16

Join us to celebrate Jesus' resurrection at 9:30am.



*Wayne Matzen,  
Deacon Moderator.*





1965 Colfax St., Concord, CA 94520

Change Service Requested

## First Press

Deadline for Jun/Jul/Aug Issue:  
Monday, May 22, 2017

*Thank you for your contribution.  
Submit all news in writing. Digital  
photos are also welcome as long as  
we may use them on our website.  
Please contact the church office  
with address changes!*

### New Office Hours!

Monday, Wed. & Thursday  
10:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Tuesday  
11:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Closed Friday

### Sunday Bulletin

EVERY MONDAY @ 12 Noon

### FPCC Purpose Statement

*Gathered in gratitude,  
we are a God-worshipping,  
Christ-trusting, and  
Spirit-dependent people  
who make, mentor and mobilize  
loving followers of Jesus Christ.*

*Our aim is to demonstrate  
and proclaim the grace and truth  
of the gospel to the next  
generation,  
giving them the opportunity  
to encounter God's love  
and to live a new life in Christ.*

### Eggs, a Hunt, and Stuff

For Youth 6th Grade and Up

Saturday, April 15th, 10:00—1:00

- \* Breakfast
- \* Stuffing and hiding Easter eggs  
Younger children will hunt for them
- \* Scavenger Hunt !!  
Bring your phone or camera



Bring a friend!!

RSVP to Ann J at [jtjohns@pacbell.net](mailto:jtjohns@pacbell.net)



First Presbyterian Church  
1965 Colfax St, Concord

### Easter Fun



Saturday April 15 1:30-3:30

For kids PK to 5th Grade

- \* Crafts
- \* Songs
- \* Snacks
- \* *Easter Egg Hunt!*



Contact Marilyn : [mwollenweber126@gmail.com](mailto:mwollenweber126@gmail.com)  
to reserve your spot!

First Presbyterian Church  
1965 Colfax Street, Concord



### First Press Distribution

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