

# First Press



## Building Community

By Rebecca Chase – Director of Community Care

### Has God Done Something Special In or Through Your Life This Week??

This is the question asked each week at our Holistic Small Group gatherings. This current study is a church-wide adventure together, focusing on “*Experiencing God*”, the book by Henry and Richard Blackaby, and bonding in fellowship. The focus of the discussions have been on the Seven Realities of Experiencing God:

- God is always at work around you.
- God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
- God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
- God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
- God’s invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
- You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
- You come to know God by experience as you obey Him, and He accomplishes His work through you.

Listen for how God is moving you.

Holistic Small Groups are essential in the life of a church. Not only do the members have opportunities to learn from each other and powerful leaders (through readings and the Bible), but also have time for prayer and fellowship with a group they can trust to keep confidences.

- It’s a place to bring new people.
- It is a place to grow.
- It’s a place to have weekly fellowship that goes deeper than coffee hour.
- It’s a place to find a shared mission.

I invite you to seek out a group that meets at a convenient time for you, if you haven’t found one already. Plan to participate this Spring or Summer. We’re saving a seat for YOU! †

### Breakfast for the Heritage Plaza Towers – A Lenten Discipline

Due to popular demand, and hungry neighbors, we are again going to serve our friends in the Heritage Plaza Towers!

The season of Lent is an important time to remember the hungry. Jesus spent 40 days in the desert being tempted and feeling the human pangs of hunger. The Bible reminds us that Jesus said to feed the hungry – in Matthew 25:35-40 (NIV):

<sup>35</sup> “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

<sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?”

<sup>40</sup> The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Breakfast will be served from Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> through Palm Sunday April 9<sup>th</sup>. I invite you to cook eggs, bacon/sausage, or pancakes; help set up festive tables and make coffee; assist in serving, especially those with walkers/wheelchairs; and/or be on the clean-up team.

Please contact **Rebecca Chase** as soon as you know your best days. It is great to have families serving together! God bless you as you humbly serve in the Breakfast Ministry. †

### Rebecca Takes On New Staff Responsibilities

As many are aware, Rebecca Chase has been doing a bit more than directing the children’s program. She is developing the small group ministry at FPCC, currently mentoring seven small groups. She is serving as the staff liaison to support the Deacons as they minister to the congregation. And she is organizing the upcoming *Authority to Heal* seminar, to be held February 10-11, to lead off a new prayer and healing ministry. During Advent, Rebecca organized the Sunday breakfasts, connecting with and inviting folks from the Heritage and Tower residential complexes across the street from our church, and plans to serve similar Sunday breakfasts again during Lent. In light of Rebecca’s new roles and responsibilities at FPCC, she has become our Director of Community Care. In this capacity, Rebecca will still be involved with the children’s and youth programs, training worship leaders and coordinating activity leaders. †

## Session Organization for 2017

### Eight Vital Church Systems

When Pastor Toby first arrived last year he introduced to Session the concept of the Eight Vital Church Systems necessary for successful church ministry and growth, with the intent that Session organize around these systems. The eight systems are defined as follows:

- Loving Relationships
- Holistic Small Groups
- Passionate Spirituality
- Spiritual Gifts
- Empowering Leadership
- Need-Based Evangelism
- Inspiring Worship
- Effective Structures

Starting in 2017, Session has been reorganized around these vital systems. While there is not a one-to-one relationship, the intent is that each of these systems is covered by one or more elders. The matrix below lists our current Session elders and shows their primary focus for the coming year:

Systems	Discipleship /Spiritual Growth	Connections (Care & Fellowship)	Great Commission (Missions/ Volunteers)	Worship & Music	Leadership	Communi-cations	Admin-istration	Clerk
<b>Responsible For:</b>	Adult Education - Adult - Youth - Children Bible Studies Alpha Circles	Congregational Events & Food (Ann) Come & See After Alpha Small (Life) Groups (Susan) Marinerships Liaison Newcomer Luncheons Village (Marilyn) Deacon Liaison Pancake Breakfast Membership Rolls/Parish	Missions Local & Abroad Praise in the Park Homeless Dinners Pancake Breakfasts Towers Singing Todos Santos Park Tent Adult Activity Center Intergenerational Trips DVC International Students	Sunday Worship Sanctuary Environment Choir(s) The Flock Guest Artists Alternative Worship Sound Booth Greeters Ushers Video	Nominating Team Developing Leaders Deacons Training	Website First Press Signage Advertising Website Prayers Visitor Packets	Personnel Finance Property Mgmt Stewardship Trustee Liaison	Session Minutes Membership Statistics
<b>Elders</b>	Marilyn Wollenweber Ann Johnson	Ann Johnson Susan Koester Marilyn Wollenweber	Susan Koester Ann Johnson	Ron Potts	David Dowell		Jon Myers Vern Hance Jonathan Aanestad	Anna Belle Horgan
<b>Staff</b>	Rebecca Chase	Rebecca Chase	Pastor Toby	Paul Ferris	Pastor Toby	Ann Keirns	Lisa Gonzalez Ken Gardner (Property)	Pastor Toby
<b>Support Staff</b>	Ann Keirns	Ann Keirns	Ann Keirns	Ann Keirns	Ann Keirns			Ann Keirns

A special thank you to outgoing elders Jerry Katt, Darryl McCollum and David Stearns. ☩

## Deacon Report from the Retreat

*By Deacon Moderator Wayne Matzen*

The deacons elected a new Moderator **Wayne Matzen** and Vice Moderator **Carrie Smith**, along with returning secretary, **Phyllis Graser**. Please note that due to changing membership that the parishes have been reduced from 16 to 13 with some realignment in parishes. Your deacon will be in contact to let you know in which parish you now reside. The following is a list of deacons for 2017:

- Wayne Matzen - Moderator
- Carrie Smith – Vice Moderator
- Phyllis Graser - Secretary
- Beth Byrne
- Kaffy Cecil
- Sheila Frey
- Carol Hance
- Sue Hooy
- Tony Marin
- Lorus Mosher
- Diane Nickerson
- Nancy Sansom
- Bill & Emily Selb

A special thank you to outgoing deacons Ernie Friesen, Ken Gardner, Valerie Gardner, Glenda Katt, and Bev McHale.

We would like to request continuing help from each member of the congregation in making new visitors welcome. Help them connect with members of the church and get involved.

☩

## Worship & Music

By Paul Ferris – Director of Music & Worship

Dear Church Family:

Having been through Advent and Christmas with you all, I feel more feet-on-the-ground at FPCC. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the services meaningful and beautiful – readers, candle lighters, decorators, singers, etc.

### Sanctuary Update

Look for some changes in the sanctuary soon. We are in the process of installing video screens and removing a few pews to make the space more user friendly.

### Tech

As part of the planned sanctuary changes, we have a need for a couple more tech-oriented volunteers. The saints that have served in that capacity for years are understandably getting burned out. Please talk to me if you have an interest or know of someone who is comfortable in that milieu.

### Sanctuary Flowers

The signup poster for making sanctuary flower dedications has been moved to the front office of the church. When you drop by, it is in the lobby right next to the reception window. Our gifted floral arrangers are **Linda Fribley** and **Kimi Dowell**. A suggested donation of \$65 is requested and the flowers will go home with you after the service.

### Worship

After much discussion in committee, and especially after conversations at the recent leadership retreat, look for more blending of contemporary and traditional music in our Sunday services. Initially, the worship committee had plans to start a second contemporary service. At this time, the consensus is rather than a second service, to incorporate more contemporary elements in our existing 9:30 service.

### Lent and Easter

Now we look forward to observing Lent and Easter.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, April 1, with a Taizé-esque service in the chapel at 7:00 pm. Briefly, a Taizé service consists of short, repetitive songs, moments of silence and prayer. Here is a Wikipedia link with lots more detail. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taizé\\_Community](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taizé_Community).

We will also have a service on Maundy Thursday, April 13 at 7:00 pm,

Plan to celebrate the Resurrection with us Easter morning, April 16, with choir, brass and band!

*Blessings to you and yours, Paul Ferris*



## FPCC Missions

### Service Worship Day

Last year, the Wednesday night's Small Group, near the end of its eight-weeks, did a service project of creating handmade Christmas Cards for medical hospitals, convalescent hospitals and senior citizen residential facilities as part of nationwide Hearts for the Holidays effort. It was fun for the group to share with each other, smile at others' cards, and watch a bit of baseball during the World Series before starting our small group's discussion. This year, all of the small groups, as well as the congregation, will have the opportunity to do a service project on February 26<sup>th</sup>. We will have, at minimum, one local indoor non-physical activity and one physical activity. Mission Team is working to finalize where we will be working on Sunday morning after our worship service, as well as the general timeline of the morning. Expect that there will be sharing, smiling and laughter by all those that participate! For more information, contact **Susan Koester**, 675-1156. ✝

### Easter Offering – El Puente Ministries

Our Easter offering this year will go to support the upcoming camp for middle schoolers that is being sponsored by El Puente Ministries.

For many years our church has supported El Puente Ministries, which was founded by our former church members Pat and Donna Noonan, whom many of you know. This is a multi-ethnic school ministry centered in the Monument Neighborhood of Concord that has shifted its focus to rebuilding its middle school ministry at Oak Grove Middle School here in Concord. Pat is a former director of the local Young Life program and is now applying his extensive knowledge and experience in reaching middle school kids for Christ. Kids in this age-range are particularly open to meeting Christ

and growing spiritually through opportunities offered by this ministry. It has a unique appeal to the many children of needy families in this part of Concord.

### Our Specific Goal

Key in recruitment and leadership development are “camps”, where the young people can get away from distractions and can grow spiritually and become Christian leaders. Our particular appeal here is to support the winter camp that is scheduled for February 18-20 at Camp Woodleaf, a Young Life camp in Southern Plumas County. What is really exciting is the fact that some of El Puente's high school kids have grown in faith to the point where they want to help develop the middle school, and some of them will go to camp in order to witness to campers and conduct training.

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## FPCC Missions (continued)

El Puente's objective is to send 20 kids to camp, and this will take around \$5,000. Our hope is that we can provide the major portion of those funds through our Easter offering. Please join in, and let's all participate in order to help these young people get to know Christ through this wonderful opportunity. This donation is above and beyond your normal tithe amount.

If you have any questions, please contact **David Dowell** at 914-0429. ☩

### Prayer Walk Coming March 18

Please keep the date open! On March 18 at 9:00 am we will host our quarterly Prayer Walk around Todos Santos and central Concord. We plan to invite the other churches who share our facility to join in. Folks from these churches come into contact with the many events that happen in Todos Santos - many from our community can be found there just relaxing, walking through or attending events.

The Tuesday Farmers Market, Summer Thursday Concert and Market bring hundreds of people to our little square every week. Children and parents are at the playground every day of the week. Sweethearts and the homeless, children, the disabled and older adults from the Towers and Heritage spend time there. Big events like Summer Concerts, Praise in the Park, and the Tree Lighting in December bring many people. Todos Santos is a place where it all happens. All who come need Jesus, whether they are happy or sad, broken or lonely.

Let us gather together on March 18 at 9:00 am to walk and pray for all of the people and businesses of our community. We can pray for God's presence to be felt here, for the Holy Spirit to move in Concord. Do not miss this chance to see how God answers prayer. Everyone is invited. Coffee and doughnuts and bagels will be provided! Gather in the Fireside Room to organize before we begin our walk. There will be sign-ups in the Fellowship Hall for several Sundays in early March so the Mission Team can prepare. ☩

### Worried about the Changing Climate?

The Contra Costa Interfaith Climate Action Network (ICAN) is hosting an Advocacy Training at St Paul's Episcopal Church on **April 1** from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. We want to bring people together to learn new strategies to alleviate the suffering right here in Contra Costa County that results from the effects of climate change and environmental pollution. There will be several speakers and a chance to exchange ideas with other attendees over a light lunch.

ICAN is associated with the Social Justice Alliance of the Interfaith Council and also with California Interfaith Power and Light, and works to be aware of local concerns that may affect our changing climate. If you are interested in attending the training or finding out more about ICAN, please contact **Maren Stanczak** at 408-5930. ☩

### Update on the Winter Nights Family Shelter Program

For fourteen years, churches in central and east Contra Costa County have hosted homeless families during the cold months, October through April. Last year the program was extended by one week, and the Homeless Summit group, which runs the program, is working to fund and find host churches to extend the program through May.

The program was developed by the Social Justice Alliance of the Interfaith Council. Up to 30 people who are part of a homeless family spend their evenings at the host churches for 2 weeks at a time, living in tents set up in fellowship halls. The program provides staff, tutoring for the children, help for the parents in finding jobs and searching for permanent housing, and a place at the Oasis Center at St Vincent de Paul in Bay Point during week days for those that aren't working or in school. The host church and other co-hosting churches provide meals and special activities. To find out more, please check out their website, [www.cccwinternights.org/](http://www.cccwinternights.org/).

For five years, FPCC has been a co-host, the last three at St Andrews Presbyterian in Pleasant Hill. We are scheduled to co-host there again this year on **April 28-30**. The Mission Team invites you to join us, preparing and serving food, being on site to interact with the clients. If you are interested in working on planning, please contact **Maren Stanczak** at 408-5930. Watch for sign up tables in April if you want to help. ☩

### Uganda 2017

Come join a multi-church mission team for Summer 2017. Ideally the team will be made of at least 10 people of all ages. This team will lead a Vacation Bible School for 1,000 children from Raise the Roof Academy in rural Uganda.

Contact **Robin Stearns** (VBS Team leader) at [Robin@fpccconcord.org](mailto:Robin@fpccconcord.org) for more information.

Come to an information meeting at First Presbyterian Church Saturday **February 4<sup>th</sup>** at 10:00 am.

Also, check out RTRA's website at [www.raisetherooacademy.org](http://www.raisetherooacademy.org).

### See's Candy Fundraiser: Success!

At the end of November Beginnings & Beyond had their first fundraiser with See's Candy. It is true that everyone loves See's because we raised \$716.50. We are almost half way to our goal of \$1,700 to purchase the Montessori Bells and accompany materials. Thank you to all who have supported us at Beginnings & Beyond.

Valentines Day is fast approaching and you can continue to help raise money for this cause. We have six 1-pound gift certificates to sell for \$19.30 each. If you are interested in one of the Gift Certificates please contact **Robin Stearns** at [Robin@fpccconcord.org](mailto:Robin@fpccconcord.org), or find her at coffee hour. We receive 100% of the funds to help with the purchase of the bells, that's \$115.80.

Finally, stay tuned as we will be having another fundraiser for Easter starting in mid-March. ☩



1965 Colfax St., Concord, CA 94520

Change Service Requested

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## *First Press*

**Deadline for Apr/May Issue:  
Monday, March 20, 2017**

*Thank you for your contribution.*

*Submit all news in writing, including your name, phone number and date of submission. Digital photos are also welcome as long as we may use them on our website. Please contact the church office with address changes!*

### *Office Hours*

**Monday, Wed. & Thursday**

**9:00 am to 4:30 pm**

**Tuesday**

**10:30 am to 4:30 pm**

**Closed Friday**

### *Sunday Bulletin Deadline:*

**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.*

## Deacons' Fair

**Sunday February 12**

We will have a Deacons' and Ministry Fair on Sunday February 12, after worship. Please join us for goodies, meet your Deacon and find a team to join!

## Annual Meeting

**Sunday February 26**

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held Sunday February 26 at 10:00 am after a short worship service. This will be a very brief meeting, followed by a period of Service, and then lunch in the Fellowship Hall at 12:15 pm. All members and regular supporters of FPCC are urged to attend.

### *First Press Distribution*

The primary distribution of First Press is electronic via e-mail. If you did not receive this and would like to be added to the electronic distribution please email [FirstPress@fpconcord.org](mailto:FirstPress@fpconcord.org). A pdf copy is also available on the FPCCConcord.org website, and a limited number of paper copies will be available in the Narthex and office. We can also mail copies to those who do not have access electronically and who cannot make it to church. Please call the office to request this service.