

First Press



Consecration Sunday – December 4

Consecration Sunday will be a special day in the life of First Presbyterian Church Concord. We hope that everyone will be able to join us in Worship that morning and at a special Celebration Lunch/Brunch immediately following.

We know that you are concerned about the future of FPCC. We ask that you use this time to prayerfully consider what Time, Talents and Treasures you might give to God in love and gratitude for what he has done, and to further his mission here in Concord.

Our Congregation opened the doors of FPCC 134 years ago and has been a vital source of ministry to our community ever since. We have been truly blessed, and we are excited about

what God has planned for us these next 134 years. We believe that this congregation has a vital role, not only in our lives but in our community, and the best is yet to come.

On Sunday December 4th we will be inviting members and supporters of FPCC to complete 2017 Estimate of Giving cards and present them as consecrated offerings to God. This will include both your monetary offering and an offering of your Time and Talents (*see article – Joy of Serving – on Page 2*). We are not just a check book for God but his hands and feet as well. As we re-establish this church in this downtown part of God's kingdom there is much work to be done with those hands and feet.

The luncheon following Worship will be a simple family meal and a celebration of what God is doing here in Concord. The meal will be catered, and is free, so please come! We will be taking reservations for lunch later in November, so please sign up.

Our goal is to have every member and regular worship attendee present for Consecration Sunday. The effectiveness of our church's mission and ministries next year depends on your initiative and dedication.

We want to thank you for sharing your faith with the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Concord. We are all deeply honored and blessed.



Advent & Christmas Events 2016

Sunday, November 27 — 1st Sunday of Advent & Thanksgiving Celebration

- 9:30am Worship
- 11:00am Adult Class: The 6 Great Ends of the Church – Final Class

Sunday, December 4 — 2nd Sunday of Advent & Consecration Sunday

- 9:30am Worship & Consecration of 2017 Estimates of Giving
- 11:00am Celebration Lunch

Sunday, December 11 — 3rd Sunday of Advent

- 9:30am Worship
- 7:00pm Christmas Concert - Cathedral Choir presenting the cantata "Lord of Glory" and other selected works, plus carol singing.

Tuesday, December 13

- 6:00pm Neighborhood caroling with Paul and his accordion. Meet in the Fireside room.

Sunday, December 18 — 4th Sunday of Advent

- 9:30am Worship: Lessons & Carols

Saturday, December 24 — Christmas Eve

- 8:00pm Candlelight Worship: The joyous sounds of choirs and carol singing accompany Scripture readings to celebrate our Savior's birth.

Sunday, December 25 — Christmas Sunday

- 9:30am Worship: Christmas Carol Stories

Sunday, January 1 — New Year's Day

- 9:30am Worship



The Joy of Serving in Our Church

By Elder David Dowell

The opportunity to serve in our church is a blessing in my life. It provides great joy to know that I am serving our Lord by serving His people. The rewards are priceless. For instance, some of the deepest friendships Kimi and I have come from serving the Lord in our church. In fact when I greet people each Sunday I often have flashbacks reminding me how I first met that person. Invariably it was on a church committee, a service project or small group study. Rarely was it while sitting in a worship service, although sometimes it happens that way, too.

Sometimes I think that the real life of the church lies behind the scenes. Therein lies a joy you cannot imagine – the joy of serving and the joy of working together with friends. As evangelist Billy Sunday said: “Those who serve are more content and happy with their life than those who do not serve the Lord and others.” Another quotation I have read somewhere is “If you have no joy in your Christian life, then there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere.”

Service opportunities exist both inside and outside the church. As an Elder, I am focused at this time on our needs inside the church, because I chair the Nominating Committee, and we are in search of individuals to serve as Deacons and Elders for next year. Soon, we will be looking for members to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee to help in our search for a new pastor.

Please think about your life right now. How do you feel about serving God either inside the Church or as part of an outside ministry? I assure you that you will find the joy of serving that Kimi and I have found. Serving as a Deacon is a wonderful opportunity, but there are also many other opportunities, like serving on a ministry team, singing in the choir, leading a Bible study or small group, helping to prepare food or to serve it at a congregational meeting or homeless dinner. The opportunities are too many to list here. Some are short-term (or one-time) opportunities, and others are longer term

commitments. Start off with something you feel uses your gifts.

If you have any hesitation to serve or doubt about the joy found in serving God, then I would suggest that you pray more and study God’s Word more. Let God speak to you. You might want to join one of our Bible studies. Pray to God to help you find the joy in serving Him. When you put God’s Word into your life on a daily basis, it will serve as constant reminder of all the wonderful things that He has done for you and the promises He has made. It will also make you want to serve Him.

So, let us never forget that finding joy in serving God is an essential part of our Christianity, because it serves as an antidote to all the troubles of the world and despair that surrounds us on a daily basis. Let the joy of serving the Lord be your strength this day and every day.



| FPCC Staff | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Rev. Dr. Toby Nelson | Interim Pastor & Head of Staff |
| Paul Ferris | Director of Music & Worship |
| Rebecca Chase | Director of Children's Ministry |
| Lisa Gonzalez | Administrative Coordinator |
| Ann Keirns | Admin to the Pastor & Elders |
| Susan Soehner | Organist |
| Ken Gardner | Lead Custodian |
| Harold Lund | Night Watchman |



FPCC Missions

Have a Very Mission Christmas and Holiday Season!

The holiday season is a time when many of us are inspired to reach out to help the less fortunate. Every year the FPCC Mission Team suggests several ways our friends and members can exercise their giving muscles.



The Giving Tree

Look for the Giving Tree in the Fellowship Hall starting the last Sunday in November. Once again FPCC will be providing Christmas gifts and Safeway certificates for Garden Park residents. These residents, previously homeless, are helped by a full time social worker and the children have a four day a week homework club to help them catch up. This year FPCC will provide Christmas for three families. The Giving Tree will be decorated with ornaments for each individual, suggesting gift ideas, or for a \$25 Safeway gift certificate. If you'd like to participate, take an ornament tag from the tree and sign up to indicate your choice. Bring two wrapped gifts for the person you selected or a gift certificate to help with holiday meals on Sunday, December 4. The gifts and certificates will be delivered to the Interfaith Housing office during that week. Contact **Susan Lawson**, 285-4430.



BARM

BARM annually holds a Christmas party for homeless and needy children. FPCC will again be a drop off place for the Concord area this Christmas. These toys will help make a child's Christmas special. Over 5,000 gifts will be handed out at this event. Collection barrels will be placed in the Narthex and in the Fellowship Hall starting on November 27. Please plan to make a difference in a young person's Christmas by placing your unwrapped gift in a barrel. More detailed information will be in Sunday bulletins, starting November 20. Contact: **David Dowell**, 914-0429.

Christmas Offering

In response to the gang rape of a school girl on the island of Sumatra, She Is Safe, a Christian organization that works with women and girls who have been or may become victims, began a program to educate Indonesian girls about how to protect themselves and where they could find help in their communities. Because the girls do not wear underwear, a special project to provide colorful ruffled pantaloons, made locally for \$10, to protect them physically and warn potential attackers that they have people who will defend them. The Mission Team selected this project for this year's Christmas Offering. Special envelopes will be placed in the pew pockets early in December, or you may give directly to the office. Watch for more detailed information in Sunday bulletins in December. Contact: **Susan Lawson**, 285-4430.



New Year's Eve Homeless Dinner

Are you looking for a different way to begin your New Year's Eve celebration? This year that's the date for the last of our fifth Saturday of the month dinners at the Concord Homeless Shelter for Single People on Arnold Industrial Way. We encourage everyone to join us in making the occasion festive for the residents of the Concord Shelter. Can you think of a special dessert you could provide? Or a great salad you could make? We'll also need beverages and bread. Sign-ups will begin in December. Check the bulletin for a reminder or just watch for our cheery crew in the Fellowship Hall. Let's serve and contribute in the spirit of the season and in the name of Christian Charity. Contact: **Ann Johnson**, 676-4330.

We hope that you will join the Mission Team in choosing a community service this holiday season, remembering that we are Christ's hands, not just during this time when we remember the gift of his

birth, but all year long! We pray that all of you will be blessed this year.

Compiled by *Maren Stanczak*



Join Mission Possible 2017 Uganda

Last summer we sent Brenda Lopez, Esther Chin, Rebecca Chase and Robin Stearns to Uganda to lead a Vacation Bible School at Raise **the Roof Academy**. The team had a wonderful time with up to 1,000 children as they told Bible stories and led crafts and games. Every day the team was given a little taste of the community as we heard from community leaders, watched dances, and listened to music performed by the community.

While our FPCC team led the VBS, the Nashville team held a medical clinic for the community. One member of the Nashville team led a team of Ugandan workers in building a playground for the children. Also a leadership training was taking place, led by two pastors from Nashville.

It may only be November, but now is time for **you** to think about becoming a part of Mission Possible 2017.

The mission is organized in five areas:

- **Medical and Wellness:** nurses, doctors, pharmacists, dentists, ophthalmologists, physical therapists
- **Mental Health:** counselors
- **VBS:** children's ministry
- **Leadership:** teachers, pastors, business leaders.
- **Construction:**

The tentative dates for 2017 are June 28-July 10. If you are interested in learning more please contact **Robin Stearns** at (925) 685-7916.



Crazy Love at First Pres

Small Groups: Developing Deep-Rooted Relationships with God and Each Other

On September 25th, the congregation heard the first in a series of sermons directed toward our Small Group discussions we would be having for the next 8 weeks. The book upon which we are basing our study is called “*Crazy Love*” by Francis Chan, a pastor and author from Simi Valley, California. Francis Chan wants his readers to go deep, trying to grasp how absolutely endless God’s love is for us! The discussions have blended the weekly Sunday sermon (HUGE thanks to Darryl McCollum and Eric Harvey for contributing to the series!), video clips, and the book chapter for each week. The group leaders, or facilitators, have done an amazing job promoting an atmosphere of trust, love, and openness. The roughly 60 participants this fall have had their eyes and hearts opened in entirely new ways.

This series concludes after the Sunday November 13th Worship time with Service Worship - a time of hands-on, love-filled serving in our community. The Missions team has been working closely with the Small Group team to coordinate needs and locations in our area. Check the Announcements in your Sunday bulletin for more information as the time draws near.

Mark your calendars for our next Small Group series: January 8th – February 26th: “*Seven Realities for Experiencing God*”. Sign-ups start Sunday December 11th, and we will need facilitators for these new groups. Will you step up this time?

We look forward to this wonderful opportunity to walk down a new path, developing relationships with God and each other!! We hope you’ll join us in this adventure!

Rebecca Chase & Ann Keirns,
Co-coordinators



Homeless Dinner

The dinner at the Concord Homeless Shelter on October 29th provided dinner to nearly 100 people. The Mission Team wishes to express its thanks and gratitude to the Merry Mac Ship and to all the other members of the congregation who helped out. Whether you helped by bringing food, helping to prepare the dinner or did the actual serving, your help was important to the success of this effort to share God’s grace with the needy.



See’s Candy for Christmas

Preschool Fundraiser

Do you enjoy chocolates? Do you often give See’s candy as gifts to Christmas visitors? We have the perfect opportunity for you to do both and help Beginnings and Beyond make some money for our Music curriculum. We are excited to begin our See’s Candies fundraiser starting Sunday November 13th. We are raising funds to purchase the Montessori Bells, a great set of musical instruments which help children distinguish notes (*see picture below*). Our fundraiser will continue through November 30th and will be ready to deliver in the beginning of December. Please come prepared for next week with your check book. For more information talk with **Robin Stearns**, Preschool Director at 925-676-6244.



Year-end Giving Deadlines

Mailed contributions to FPCC dated and postmarked on or before December 31 will be credited towards 2016. All hand delivered checks to the church office must be received by noon on Thursday, December 29, when the office closes, to receive 2016 credit. Online Giving at <http://www.fpccconcord.org/giving/giving-online.htm> must be done on or before December 31 to be credited towards 2016. Gifts not meeting these deadlines will be applied to 2017. For questions regarding year-end giving, you should always consult with your tax advisor. Year-end contributor statements will be prepared and mailed in January by our Administrative Coordinator Lisa Gonzalez (ext. 11). If you received a paper copy in the mail of your 09/30/2016 contributor statement and you would prefer an email copy, please provide your email address to Lisa at lisag@fpccconcord.org. Thank you!



2017 Giving Envelopes

Numbered sets of offering envelopes will be available for your use in 2017 starting in December. Picking them up in the Narthex saves the church postage! They will be arranged alphabetically for all FPCC members and those who have previously indicated they desire envelopes. If you do not find your set by name, please write your name on the sign up list or call **Lisa Gonzalez** at the church (ext. 11) and we’ll get a set to you right away.





1965 Colfax St., Concord, CA 94520

Change Service Requested

First Press

**Deadline for Feb/Mar Issue:
Monday, January 18, 2016**

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 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.*

COOKIES NEEDED !!

Congregational Care will be hosting a reception after the Christmas Concert on December 11th. Please remember us in your baking schedule and let Joanne Myers or Carrie Smith know if you are able to provide a few dozen treats. Please bring them to church before/after services or before the concert, trayed and ready to serve, if possible. Thank you!



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. 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.