

Advent and Christmas Schedule 2017

Advent and Christmas are rich times in the life of the church, and Christmas is an especially exciting time for music here at First Presbyterian Church! There are many opportunities for worship and to hear the choir as they glorify God in song this season.

Below is the schedule through the end of the year:

Sunday November 5th (End Daylight Savings Time – Set Clocks Back)

9:30 am Worship

11:00 am Mission and Vision Giving Workshop (Fireside Room)

Sunday November 12th

9:30 am Worship

11:00 am Tara Chase – Frontier Fellowship (Fireside Room)

Tuesday November 14th

2:00 pm Presbytery Meeting at FPCC (until 9:00 pm)

Sunday November 19th – Consecration Sunday

9:30am Worship & Consecration of 2018 Estimates of Giving

11:00am Celebration Lunch (Fellowship Hall)

Sunday November 26th – Thanksgiving Weekend

9:30 am Worship

11:00 am Adult Class – Darryl McCollum – In All Things Grace: A Layman's Take on Church Unity (Fireside Room)

Sunday December 3rd – 1st Sunday of Advent

9:30am Worship

11:00 am Adult Class – Darryl McCollum – In All Things Grace: A Layman's Take on Church Unity (Fireside Room)

12:00 pm Come & See New Members Class

Sunday December 10th – 2nd Sunday of Advent

9:30am Worship

11:00 am Adult Class – Ann Keirns - Advent Through the Old Testament (Fireside Room)

12:00 pm Come & See New Members Class

7:00 pm **Christmas Concert** (with guest instrumentalists)

Sunday December 17th – 3rd Sunday of Advent

9:30am Worship – **Lessons and Carols (Cantata)**

11:00 am Adult Class – Ann Keirns - Advent Through the Old Testament (Fireside Room)

Sunday December 24th – 4th Sunday of Advent & Christmas Eve

9:30 am Worship

(No Adult Class)

5:30 pm **Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship**

Sunday December 31st – New Year's Eve

9:30 am Worship

(No Adult Class)



Reflections as Director of Music and Worship:

by Andrew Cardiasmenos

It has been an amazing first month serving here at First Pres as your new Director of Music and Worship. I appreciate the warm welcome from the choir, pastor, congregation, and greater community. I have thoroughly enjoyed planning and leading worship for a few weeks and engaging the choir and congregation. It's also been a pleasure directing such a talented choir and working with accomplished accompanist Susan Soehner. We recently had our annual choir retreat in Bodega Bay, and it was a wonderful experience. I enjoyed rehearsing Advent and Christmas music, but also getting to know Susan and the members of the choir a little more throughout the weekend. It was capped off with a very moving, spiritual worship service at Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Church under the guidance of Pastor Cornelia Cyss-Carter, where we heard many first-hand stories from North Bay fire refugees and



Choir Retreat - Bodega Bay

discussed our role as stewards. By graciously donating some of our food to the refugees in Bodega Bay, and uplifting their spirits through our beautiful music at Two Rock, the Concord choir exemplified this ministry of stewardship and truly made the weekend unforgettable.

I am continuing to plan for the Advent and Christmas season, including congregational hymns, choir anthems, and guest

instrumentalists to enrich the Christmas concert. Some of my worship goals for the future include teaching the congregation more contemporary hymns, as well as bringing back more traditional structures such as the Doxology. As time goes on, I look forward to working with everyone here at First Pres, inspiring all to glorify the Lord through music.



Consecration Sunday November 19

by Vern Hance – Chair of Stewardship

Sunday, November 19th is a day of joyful celebration! This is a day to honor each person's commitment to God's continuing ministry at First Presbyterian Church in the upcoming year. I encourage you to plan now to attend the two exciting and important congregational events.

A guest preacher is featured during worship, starting at 9:30am. The Reverend Dan Prout of Sierra Ministries will bring us a message of joy in stewardship. We will offer our commitment goals for the year of 2018 as an act of worship.

Following the service we will continue the celebration with a special catered lunch. Reserve your spot for this Celebration Lunch. Please submit your family reservation during the Worship Service on Nov. 5th or Nov. 12th. Reservation cards will also be available at the table in the Fellowship Hall. You can also call and leave your name and number of attending family members at the office during the week, until November 13th.

God has given us so much. Now is our opportunity to give back to God. We look forward to celebrating with you as we grow together – spiritually, deeply, and thankfully – in our stewardship to His Kingdom. †

FPCC Staff

Rev. Dr. Toby Nelson	Interim Pastor & Head of Staff
Andrew Cardiasmenos	Director of Music & Worship
Rebecca Chase	Director of Community Care
Lisa Gonzalez	Administrative Coordinator
Ann Keirns	Admin to the Pastor & Elders
Susan Soehner	Organist
Harold Lund	Custodian & Night Watchman

2 Corinthians 9:7-8

⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

From the Desk of Rebecca Chase



Small Groups

In the September/October issue of First Press, I listed all the groups that are possible to join in or around our campus. There were nine weekly and four monthly groups, getting together for mission, fellowship, and/or Bible study. We are so grateful for the leaders who gather folks together.

Starting in January, FPCC will kick off a new series for Small Groups, both old and new. The series is based on a book by Karen Ehman called **"Listen, Love, Repeat"**. We live in a culture that tells us "me first, you second" to get to experience happiness. In this Small Group study, we will see how the key to moving forward is to embrace backward living. We will look at scriptural examples of those who lived alert to the needs of others, and of Jesus – the one who noticed those who least expected to be noticed.

Those of you with a spiritual gift for Hosting/ Hospitality will find this a great way to gather a group together! A DVD will be available, as well as a guide. We may even do some creating.

If you would like to start or join a group, let me know! I have all sorts of helpful tools and trainings available to get a group going.

Director of Community Care

Don't be shy! If you:

- H** – Have a **H**eart for people
- O** – Can **O**pen your home (or a café or ...)
- S** – Can **S**hare some Snacks
- T** – Can **T**urn on a DVD player or video

... then you can **HOST** a small group!
Next series starts in **JANUARY!**

Children's Worship & Education

The Children's Worship Team will be leading the preschool and young elementary children in lessons about Abraham and Sarah from November 5th through December 3rd. December 10th and 17th, the children will celebrate that an angel told Mary that Jesus is God's special gift, and that Jesus was God's special gift to us.

The Nursery is always ready for new little guests. Lynn Justice is seeking warm arms and sharp eyes to help with the tiniest ones in our congregation. Talk to her or to me about dedicating an hour a month to the ministry of babies and toddlers!

New Kid Space

We have created a little kid space in the Sanctuary! A pew was removed, and soft carpet put down. Baskets under the pew have coloring materials, books for looking at, and soft toys for the children who aren't ready to leave the sanctuary (or mom!) yet. Please join me in welcoming new families who find a spot there.

Prayer and Healing

Don't forget about our **MONTHLY Prayer Walk** on the **THIRD Saturday** of the month. Non-walkers also welcome - in the

chapel. Come at 9:30am for refreshment and prayer!

Prayer Chain and bulletin prayer requests go to the office. If you would like prayer after a worship service, please contact me – I am starting to gather a team for after-service prayers.

Your Deacons

Please get in touch with your Deacon if you are heading to the hospital, need prayer, need communion, or want to keep your church family updated on anything. Your Deacon is such a wonderful resource!

One Other Thing

I will be working with the many ministry teams to create a central resource of ministry opportunities. I will also be working with **YOU** to discover your gifts, dreams, burdens and joys. For all ministers of God, there is a sweet spot where you feel your heart is full when you serve there. I am eager to find your spot on God's ministry path!

"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."
Romans 12: 4-8 (NIV)



Service Opportunities for the Holiday Season

from the Great Commission Team

The Great Commission Team is again suggesting a number of ways that you can serve the less fortunate during the holidays. This year has been particularly tough for many, and we all can experience the lift of offering a helping hand to others. Details follow

Thanksgiving Opportunity: Baskets of Blessings, New This Year

Innocent people can be unfairly hurt when someone in their family makes a serious mistake. That's why East Bay Chaplains contacted the Great Commission Team to ask FPCC to collect food for Thanksgiving for families of some prison convicts. We are hoping that everyone in our church can help make Thanksgiving a special day for the three or four families that we have been assigned. There will be sign-ups in the Fellowship Hall the first two Sundays in November. We are asking each person/family in the congregation to donate at least one item; you may donate more if you wish. We encourage you to work together with a group you may belong to – Sunday School class, Bible Study Group or group of friends. You will not need to prepare or serve the donated food; it will be collected November 19th, the Sunday before Thanksgiving, and delivered by volunteers. If you are unable to donate, please pray for these families. For more information, contact **Susan Lawson** at 285-4430.

For the Christmas season, the usual opportunities it's traditional!

The Giving Tree

In support of Interfaith Housing projects, FPCC has been assigned 3 families with a total of 12

children for this Christmas. Starting November 19th, the Sunday before Thanksgiving, look for The Giving Tree on the stage in the Fellowship Hall; it will be decorated with felt ornaments, which will have gift requests for a family member or requests for a Safeway gift certificate. We ask you to take an ornament from the tree and sign up to buy a fun gift and a practical gift for a family member or a gift certificate. Bring the food certificates or two wrapped gifts to the Fellowship Hall on December 4th, the first Sunday in December. Contact: **Susan Lawson** at 285-4430.

BARM Toy Drive

FPCC will again be participating in the Bay Area Rescue Mission Toy Drive this Christmas. BARM annually holds a Christmas party for homeless and needy children, and the donated 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 or about November 26th. FPCC will also be serving as a drop-off point for other churches and individuals in the Concord area. Please plan to make a difference in young person's Christmas by bringing your unwrapped gift. Contact: **David Dowell** at 914-0429.

Christmas Offering: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

Because of the quantity and variety of disasters that have made life a nightmare for many this year, the Great Commission Team decided to designate our annual Christmas Offering to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance



(PDA). We have offered PDA as an option for the many disasters that have touched people's hearts during the year. It enables congregations and mission partners of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to witness to the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crises and catastrophic events.

PDA:

- focuses on the long term recovery of disaster-impacted communities.
- works collaboratively with church partners and members of the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) internationally, and nationally with other faith-based responders.
- connects partners locally and internationally with key organizations active in the response – United Nations, NVOAD (National Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster), World Food Program, Red Cross, FEMA and others.

Special Christmas offering envelopes will be available soon in the pew racks for your gifts. Contact: **Maren Stanczak** at 408-5930.

As we dive into this year's holiday season, the Great Commission Team wishes all of you a safe and blessed time and hopes that you will join us in supporting any or all of the opportunities offered above.



1965 Colfax St., Concord, CA 94520

Change Service Requested

First Press

**Deadline for Feb/Mar Issue:
Monday, January 22, 2018**

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!

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

Mission & Values

Our Mission:

Love God, Love People ... Serve

Values Statement:

*Guided by Scripture and prayer,
we are a welcoming place
where people, service,
and God's love meet.*

*Focused on hospitality,
inclusiveness, and spiritual gifts,
we worship God with delight.*

*Unified in Jesus Christ,
we are led by the Holy Spirit
to invite, engage, and share
God's Truth with each other,
our community and the world.*

November 14 Presbytery Meeting at FPCC

The San Francisco Presbytery Meeting to be held at FPCC is right "around the corner" on November 14th. We have had great response from the congregation to help host this event. We appreciate those who have offered to give of their services in the areas of Set-Up, Clean-Up, Host/Greeters, Registrars, Cooks, Sound 'Techs', etc. There are two more Sundays when the sign-up list will be available, where empty spots can be filled with a few more volunteers. We still need a few folks to provide healthy 'finger snacks' like raw veggies, cheese cubes, crackers, grapes, (not sweets), etc. If you have a question, please get in touch with **Anna Belle Horgan** (685-5595) or **Ann Johnson** (676-4330), Co-chairmen.

Come & See New Member Class

Sundays December 3rd and 10th for lunch. More details to come in weekly bulletin.

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@fpccconcord.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.