

FIRST PRES PRESS



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PALO ALTO

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Dear Ones,

A few weeks ago Kathy Merkle-Raymond shared with Council an article by N. Graham Standish, a contributor to the Alban Institute. As we enter into this New Year, and as we discuss and deliberate on new directions for our community of faith, I hope that you will find this article on rational functionalism enlightening. I know that many on Council, myself included, found Standish's reflections helpful as we attempt to re-imagine and re-engage Micah's Call for this day and age.

Standish writes:

Many denominations, churches, pastors, and members have become mired in a series of worthless arguments in their attempt to diagnose why mainstream denominations and churches are in decline. Too many in the mainstream church think the problems have to do with theological positions, styles of worship, or availability of programs. So they say that the decline is the result of churches being too liberal or too conservative, or that the decline is due to our too-traditional worship. They say that we don't meet enough of people's needs, and we need to offer more programs.

What I have consistently noticed in almost all thriving congregations, however, is that what makes the difference is the extent to which the community is open to God at its core. Many churches simply aren't open to God. They let the will, ego, and purpose of the dominant voices in their congregation, whether the pastor's or that of a few strong members, drive the agenda. Instead of seeking God's call and purpose, they argue over who is right and wrong. Declining churches tend not to be open to God's presence. They worship, meet, and engage in ministry and mission, but their sense is that God is in heaven, we are on earth, and all that matters is doing good deeds. The congregants have no sense that Christ is in their midst, and that this presence of Christ can bless them and make their churches places of love. So they continue to engage in the practices of the church, but they don't expect an encounter with Christ.

This lack of awareness in mainline churches today is symptomatic of a far greater problem—something I call "rational functionalism"—a disease that has afflicted all mainline denominations.

Rational functionalism is rooted in the idea that we can uncover the mysteries of life and the universe mainly through rational thought and disciplined investigation. It is the tendency of denominations, their congregations, and their leaders to subscribe to a view of faith and church rooted in a restrictive, logic-bound theology that ignores the possibility of spiritual experiences and miraculous events.

This approach to faith is a by-product of the Age of Enlightenment, whose focus was on the rational and scientific pursuit of truth. From this perspective, God is a problem to be solved through a method that mirrors the scientific method as closely as possible, and if that isn't feasible, then by restricting the inquiry to the laws of human logic and analysis. The rational functional approach can reduce a congregation's practice to the attempt to lead people into a positivistic, logical exploration of religion and faith. The idea here is that a theological, historical, sociological, psychological, anthropological, economic, and philosophical understanding of the Christian faith will enable us to discern the laws of God and human life more

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Pastor's Letter—continued

clearly, and we can therefore learn to live better lives.

In short, this approach reflects what a national leader in my denomination once said to me: "If we can just get people to think right theologically, then all of our problems will go away." The problem is that faith is more than just a logical, empirical inquiry into God and God's ways. It involves our minds, spirits, bodies, relationships, and beings. To address the human seeking for God from only a rational, logical, theological perspective is limiting.

One danger of rational functionalism is that it can cause pastors and leaders to become over-intellectual in their approach to faith. God becomes an abstract notion, not a presence whom we can experience, form a relationship with, and love. Increasingly, these pastors and leaders endanger their faith. They don't know what to do with God. They especially don't know what to do with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They can appreciate Jesus from a historical perspective, but what do they do with the resurrected Christ who, according to Scripture, is incarnated in the world, in relationships, and in the human heart? What do they do with the Holy Spirit, who inspires, heals, and miraculously touches life? Ultimately, they become so intellectual in their approach that they not only lose their own faith, but struggle with leading others to faith.

I am not advocating that pastors and church leaders should remain theologically and historically ignorant, or that we should blindly accept everything in the Bible as historical fact. Understanding Scripture and Christian faith from a more critical and academic point of view is a good thing because it can help us to understand the context and intent of Scripture, thus helping us hear God's voice more clearly when we read Scripture. My point is that when academic inquiry and scientific skepticism become stronger than an emphasis on forming faith and leading people to an encounter with God, the church declines because people are no longer led to form a living faith in God that can transform their lives. The church becomes little more than a social agency filled with well-meaning but spiritually dead people.

In churches caught in the grip of rational functionalism, sermons tend to become academic papers read to the people in the pews. They don't address more basic issues: How are we supposed to endure living with pain, loneliness, and turmoil? How are we supposed to find God amid life's darkness? Bible studies focus on the historical, sociological, economic, and cultural issues of the time, with the intent of uncovering what theological message the writer of a Bible passage is trying to impart. They don't address more basic issues:

- *What is God saying to me through the Scripture about how to live my life?*
- *What is God saying to me about what God is doing in my life, especially in the face of my suffering?*
- *How is God calling me to love others and to reach out to those who are suffering, both near and throughout the world, and who are in need of God's love as well as mine?*

The primary problem at the core of rational functionalism is that it fails to treat God as a tangible presence. God is treated mostly as an idea or thought, or as an entity we encounter when we die, rather than as a tangible presence in the here and now. There is no sense that God's kingdom is all around us, and that this kingdom is a spiritual reality in which we can experience God directly.

A second problem with rational functionalism is that it functionalizes the life of the church, turning everything from worship to committee meetings into routinized events with little connection to a larger purpose. In the rationally functional church, the focus is on maintaining the institution, not on creating experiences through which God can be encountered and experienced in our midst. What matters most is preaching in the prescribed manner, adhering to particular rituals in the traditional way, and singing only the traditional hymns. Guiding people to a tangible encounter, experience, and relationship with Christ isn't much of a concern. Teaching people how to discover the power of the Holy Spirit in their midst is never emphasized because the object of the church has been reduced to doing what we've always done, to function the way the church has always functioned simply for the sake of functioning. Guiding people to discover the Creator's call in their lives, calling them and us to live deeper, richer, and greater lives of love and service, is ignored in favor of guiding people simply to function as Christians have always functioned. In short, the message is reduced to (as someone once told me) "We should be Christians because Christianity is good and ethical, and we should be good and ethical people. The church's role

Pastor's Letter—continued

is to teach us to follow the Golden Rule.

Ultimately, becoming a blessed church means overcoming rational functionalism. In blessed churches, people not only expect to experience God; they do experience God. Their expectations open the door to God, who stands knocking. They expect to hear the Creator's voice guiding the church to what it is called to be and do. They expect to encounter and be blessed by Christ. They expect the power of God the Holy Spirit to flow through their life and the church's, blessing them in so many ways.

May we greet this new year *not* with rational functionalism but rather with resolved expectation, the expectation that the Divine is ready and waiting to do a new thing in our midst if we are willing to open our hearts to the Spirit's faithful flow!

Much peace and promise to you and yours,

Rob

Worship Schedule for January 2011

Sunday, January 1st

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship in the Sanctuary—Rus Kosits preaching
11:30 A.M.	Coffee / Fellowship

Sunday, January 8th

Epiphany Sunday-Communion

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship in the Sanctuary
10:45 A.M.	Children's Educational Classes
11:30 A.M.	Coffee / Fellowship

Sunday, January 15th

Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship with the congregation of Stuart Chapel (AME Zion) Pastor Lee Young preaching
11:30 A.M.	Coffee / Fellowship

Sunday, January 22nd

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship in the Sanctuary
10:45 A.M.	Children's Educational Classes
11:30 A.M.	Coffee / Fellowship

Sunday, January 29th

Annual Congregational Meeting

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship in the Sanctuary
10:45 A.M.	Children's Educational Classes
11:30 A.M.	Lunch / Annual Congregational Meeting in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, February 5th

Ordination/Installation Sunday

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship in the Sanctuary
10:45 A.M.	Children's Educational Classes
11:30 A.M.	Coffee / Fellowship

Other January Activities

COUNCIL'S REFLECTIONS AROUND REIMAGINING/REENGAGING MICAH'S CALL: A WORK IN PROGRESS TOWARD FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR OUR COMMUNITY OF FAITH

Do Justice Love Kindness Walk A Humble Path With The Divine

Sunday, January 8th

Small Group discussions will take place at 9:30 a.m. during Adult Study at various campus locations.

Wednesday, January 11th

A Small Group discussion will also take place on Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. in the Lounge.

Sunday, January 15th

Small Group discussions will take place immediately following worship at 11:30 a.m. in various locations around the campus.

Please make every effort to be present for one or all of these special gatherings.

ADULT STUDY

Rus Kosits will be leading a class on **January 15th, 22nd, and 29th** on the mission, vision, and values of Youth and Children's ministry at First Pres PA. The class will present Rus' philosophy of ministry and invite discussion on how this does (and does not) address the needs and concerns of the youth in the Palo Alto community. Following classes will explore the ideas and application of critical biblical study, the 'hermeneutic of suspicion,' and inclusivity in community building. We will conclude with a sample lesson featuring the music of John Newton, Katy Perry, Dave Matthews, and Woody Guthrie.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRY

On December 18th, the youth and children had the privilege of presenting their dramatic performance "Occupy Christmas" as the Sunday prompting. This presentation was the result of several weeks' hard work of planning, thinking, feeling, and writing that the youth undertook when I challenged them to come up with an idea for a Christmas pageant that was about Christmas, as they understood it.

The number one response when asked what Christmas was about was family. Holiday time spent, intentionally, together, outside of the normal routines of work and school – time spent as family. As we talked about this further – as I made the youth think about all the symbols and actions that make up the Christmas season, the idea and image of family endured as the organizing thought – that Christmas is a time for shared togetherness and love as we as a caring Christian community understand it.

In our production, family took many dimensions and expressions; a self-absorbed diva, Morgana Bling-bling (as portrayed by our very own Morgan Keller), surrounded by devoted fans and servants was a family of sorts, as we the crowd gathered in the town square. Parents and children fleeing from political oppression may have been the most recognizable, but not the only mode or model of family as we understood it. In each scene, we attempted to ask, more than tell, what justice, love, mercy, and humility might look like in those particular family settings – and what practical living out of the Christmas message might transform families for the better.

I was excited to offer ideas to the youth and let them run with it when it came to developing ideas for the Christmas drama. Two wonderful elements emerged: the enthusiasm for sharing their musical gifts with the congregation, and the surprise ending. My adult pessimism led me to draft an ending to the story where Herod ran away, and the occupy family was allowed to return to the town square. The youth wanted something more, and suggested that Herod be changed by his experience with "Pageant," the angel of Christmas, and that he be the one who went out, and called everyone back together.

Happy New Year,
Rus Kosits

Other January Activities—continued

COOL PLANET NEWS



Thanks to those of you who supported our Regifting table at the Social Justice Holiday Fair. We hope that your gifts were well-received!

On **Sunday, January 8th, at 11:45**, we will meet in the Church Lounge to make plans for the new year. Please join us; contact Shirley Eglington with questions and ideas.

Pat Kinney

PRIME TIMERS: January 10, 12-2 P.M. Fellowship Hall

AN HOUR (or so) WITH RUS KOSITS

You've heard his engaging and creative talks with children during worship. Come to Prime Timers this month to learn about Rus Kosits and his spiritual journey.

Rus will describe his experience and expectations of various elements within the progressive Christian movement, with a focus on seminary at San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) and the women's ordination movement in the Catholic Church at Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community (MMACC) in San Diego. Ideas to be discussed will include the future of progressive ecumenical movements, the effects the emphasis on praxis in seminary education has on the emerging leadership of the church, as well as what the lived history of women's ordination might tell us about current ordination issues.



Rus is the Seminary Intern for Youth, Children's and Family Ministries at First Presbyterian Church and spouse of Rev. Nancy Corran, associate pastor of MMACC – a leading congregation in “restoring women's ordination in the Roman Catholic Church.”

All are welcome. Bring your own bag lunch plus cookies or fruit to share. Please come early to help set up and stay to help clean up...”many hands make light work.”

Next month: February 14, 2012. “What d’ya mean I sound like an Aussie?” A Merkle-Raymond Trip Report. It promises to be a G'day, mate. No worries.

Also Note...

SENIOR CHAT

Making resolutions for 2012? If you are over 50 years of age, we hope you will include the decision to join the Senior Chat on the second and fourth Fridays in the Fireside Room of Covenant Presbyterian Church. Our warm, welcoming group enjoys the stimulation of new ideas, tasty snacks, and a little exercise. We start at 10 a.m. For more information, call Rev. Dona Smith-Powers (650-494-3093).

January 13: "Caring and Being Cared for..." We have all been in situations of both care giving and receiving care. Sue Alvey will help us to explore this life experience. She is the current director of Social Services for the Rose Kleiner Day Health Center. She has started caregiver support groups and the original Senior Chat. Thank you, Sue!

January 27: "Senior Nutrition" is always a concern for us as we want to nourish our mental and physical health. Our topic will bring us the latest information about the subject. Georgette Silver, from Villa Retirement Community, will join us and will also bring the Dietician with her.

Looking Back



Bill Liberatore directs the Gunn High School Chamber Singers for the Prime Timers on December 13th. Attendees enjoyed lunch and carols in Fellowship Hall before moving into the Sanctuary for an inspirational concert of holiday music. A festive reception was held in Fellowship Hall after the concert.

CHRISTMAS FOR OTHERS SERVES 8 FAMILIES, 15 CHILDREN



Thanks to the generosity of many, and in partnership with the Ecumenical Hunger Program, First Presbyterian Church was able to provide food, clothing, gift cards, and modestly priced toys for 8 families, including 15 children:

- * Each child received 3-4 gifts to open on Christmas morning.
- * Each family received Safeway gift cards totaling \$300-\$500, based upon family size.
- * Each family received a \$100 Target gift card.

In addition, we were able to donate a box of new or gently used items for EHP to distribute as they wished.

It goes without saying that the Wrapping Party would not happen without the assistance of many people. So, at this time, we wish to thank:

- * The Merkle-Raymond family for all of their pre-party help.
- * Christmas Cookies Bakers: Joy Sleizer, Pat Kinney, Holly Brady, Kathy Durham, and Frances Young.
- * Pianist Derrick Kikuchi and his Singers.
- * Shopper: Joy Sleizer.
- * Wrapping Party Volunteers: Caity Brady, Lucas and Al Brooks, Melissa Kirven-Brooks, Adrienne Losch, Laurie Nordlund, and Joy Sleizer.
- * Javier for helping us with the set-up.
- * Rob for your ever-present support and guidance.

Thanks to all!

Note: Christmas for Others is supported solely by monetary and gift donations from the congregation. The annual church operating budget provides no funds to support this ministry. At the end of the program, any surplus funds are donated directly to EHP. First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto has worked with EHP each advent season for over 30 years.



CFO Coordinators--Holly Brady and Sally Nordlund



Looking Back—continued



Rus Kosits and the youth and children of First Pres presented their Christmas drama, "Occupy Christmas," during worship Sunday, December 18th.



First Pres folks enjoy food, drink, and fellowship at the annual Christmas Eve reception after the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service, Saturday, December 24th.

Council Highlights

Council met on December 21 at the manse for our annual joint dinner with the deacons. We had a nice evening of food and fellowship, but first, of course, there was business to attend to, so we did have an abbreviated meeting.

John Zlatnik, Chair of the Teaching Ministry, asked us to brainstorm with him, as the speaker for their February series had to withdraw, leaving the schedule empty. Suggestions were made for a series around refugee issues, and a few speakers were suggested. John was happy with that idea and will work on getting something put together for Adult Ed in February.

Dave Thornton brought a request from the Worship Ministry to move the communion service from January 1 to January 8, as Rob will be out of town on the first. He also requested approval for an invitation to the members of Stewart Chapel AME Zion Church in Redwood City for a joint service with us on January 15th (MLK Jr. Sunday). Both requests were approved unanimously.

Council Highlights—continued

Staff Relations Ministry Chair Karen Wentzel reminded us that the small group meetings with the congregation to facilitate discussion of the staffing proposal will be held on January 8th, 11th, and 15th. There will be two Council members with each small group, one to facilitate discussion and one to take notes for Council review.

Karen also reminded us that those who do volunteer work with the children of the congregation must take part in Safe Church training offered by the Presbytery. There will be a training session at First Pres sometime in January, and we will be reviewing the list of teachers and other volunteers to ensure that all are trained.

One last issue from Staff Relations was the housing component of Rob Martin's terms of call. The congregation votes on the terms of call at the annual meeting which will be held on January 29th, but the housing component must be approved by 12/31 of the calendar year if it is going to be changed. Council was asked to provisionally approve an increase of \$2880, from \$29,120 (the level for the last 5 years) to \$32,000. This is the stated imputed value of the manse, and it affects Rob's pension calculation and his self-employment tax. It does not affect the amount of his paycheck. Staff Relations arrived at this number after consultation with Joey Lee at Presbytery. Staff Relations also suggests raising the parsonage/manse allowance (used for maintenance) from \$11,000 to \$12,000 for 2012. Both requests were approved, with confirmation from the congregation required at the annual meeting.

Lastly, Rob reminded us all that the annual meeting of the congregation will be held on January 29.

Helene Butler, Clerk

Key Financial Highlights (Through November 30th)

Major Categories		Status <i>(Rounded actual compared to prorated budget)</i>
Pledge Income	☺	\$700 under budget
Total Congregational Giving	☹	\$17,200 under budget
Staff Compensation	☹	\$9,600 under budget
Administrative	☺	\$3,500 under budget
Facilities	☹	\$11,300 under budget
Presbyterian & Ecumenical Giving	☺	\$1,300 over budget
Social Justice	☺	\$2,500 over budget
Total Income	☹	\$3,300 under budget
Total Expenditures	☺	\$29,400 under budget
Income – Expenditures	☺	\$27,708 income

Financial Report Commentary

Income from Congregational Giving

Thank you for catching up 2011 pledges before year-end! Current year pledge income is under budget by only \$700 for the 11 months ended November 30th. However, donor-identified contributions are under budget by \$17,200. We will take a close look at the donor-identified income category in preparing the 2012 budget.

Total Income

Total Income is \$3,300 under budget. An offset to the Congregational Giving concern noted above is the income from draw

Key Financial Highlights—continued

amounts taken from the Legacy Circle Fund. A total of \$24,240 was drawn in November, representing the budgeted draws for the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2011. As of December 23rd, the Legacy Circle Fund balance totals \$1.155 million – a true blessing. Thanks be to God for the many generous gifts donated to First Pres to sustain our worship and ministries!

Expense Categories

All committees and ministries have carefully managed spending against their 2011 budgets:

Staff and Professional Expenses are \$9,600 under budget.

Facilities Expenses are \$11,300 under budget, reflecting continued deferred spending on repairs and church facility maintenance projects. As noted in previous reports, we are highly aware that we cannot continue to postpone maintenance projects that will preserve and protect our facilities in the long run.

Administrative Expenses are \$3,500 under budget, and we thank Sarah Clementson for her efficient management of the church office and our tenant relationships. In 2012, we expect to invest in an upgrade for our outdated office telephone and network systems.

Social Justice Ministry has spent the entire 2011 budget as of November 30th. The Social Justice budget totaled \$28,000 this year. In addition to Social Justice Ministry spending, our church has completed our full year commitment to the General Mission Fund (\$15,000) and the Council of Churches (\$1,000).

Year-to-Date Net Income

We ended November with a net income of \$26,708. The addition of the November draw from the Legacy Circle Fund and the “catch up” in pledges during the month brought us out of the deficit position we faced at the end of October. Thank you all for keeping your pledges and donations current, and for your faithful commitment to supporting First Pres.

Stewardship Reminder

Rob Martin delivered a challenging and thought provoking prompting on the lectionary [Matthew 25: The Parable of the Talents] for Stewardship Sunday, November 13th. We joyfully celebrated the start of Stewardship season, including a luncheon following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. We heard personal testimonies from members of our church about what First Pres means to them and why they feel called to give to our faith community. Thanks be to God for our Staff and the Stewardship Ministry team for hosting this event.

It is meaningful and inspirational to see how many ways our church gives to the community, as shown in the handout that accompanied our stewardship letters and pledge cards for 2012. If you did not receive the Stewardship Ministry mailing for 2012, please contact Sarah Clementson, Church Office Administrator, so she can send an information packet to you.

We encourage each of you to prayerfully consider your pledge donation to First Pres for the year ahead and to please submit your pledge planning information to Julie Barney, Pledge Accountant, through the Church Office. Pledge donations for 2012 are important as Council engages with you in visioning, staffing and program planning discussions in the three cluster group sessions scheduled in January.

Per Capita Fee

Each year our denomination assesses a per capita fee, a “head tax” for each church member, which is used to support the work and ministry of the church at the Presbytery Council, Synod, and General Assembly levels. This year our per capita fee is \$7,250, or \$29.00 per member. The church pays the total amount on behalf of all members.

We encourage every member to reimburse First Presbyterian for your per capita fee by writing a check for \$29.00 and noting “Per Capita” in the memo line. The amount is \$58.00 for couples. We are not charged for friends of the church, although friends are certainly welcome to contribute also!

Please consider your per capita donation as a form of mission giving above your regular contributions to the church. By helping to pay the per capita fee, you free up money in the 2012 budget for funding other priority items. Should you have any questions, please contact Kathy Merkle-Raymond, Finance Ministry Chair, or Gordon Craig, Stewardship Chair. Thank you!

Kathy Merkle-Raymond

DECEMBER WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Date	Early Church	10:30 Service	TOTAL
12/4	10	109	119
12/11	13	113	126
12/18	12	125	137
12/24		(Christmas Eve)	240
12/25	23	(No 10:30 service)	23
Total for Month of December:			645

Mandated Reporter and Abuse Misconduct Prevention Training

For: Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Elders, Deacons, Youth and Children's Ministry Directors

Saturday, January 21st
First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.—Lunch Provided

Please RSVP a week ahead of training to Natasha Jackson at the Presbytery office, Natasha@sanjosephy.org

Deacons' Diary

The Board of Deacons thanks the many generous donations to the Deacon Flower Fund for the Christmas Poinsettias to adorn the Sanctuary for the Christmas Eve Worship Service. We were able to purchase 35 large plants and 18 smaller plants. Every member of the staff received a plant, and each deacon delivered plants to those in his/her neighborhood who they had identified to receive a poinsettia.

Trish Hallenbeck, Neighborhood #3, and Pat Kinney, Neighborhood #7, will be ending their term of service as Deacons. We will miss them greatly! Information about our new deacons beginning their service will be in the February PRESS .

And, Anne Irons will be visiting the Worship Service on January 8. This will be her first visit since her move to Medford, Oregon.

Mary Alice Thornton

Updates from Ministries, Small Groups, Committees, and Task Forces**FILM GROUP: "Fair Game"**

"Fair Game" (2010) is a movie of political intrigue – and a great way to launch a discussion about politics and morality.

When George W. Bush justifies military action against Iraq by claiming Saddam Hussein procured uranium to build nuclear weapons, former U.S. Ambassador Joseph Wilson (played by Sean Penn) writes an op-ed piece to the New York Times saying his investigation found this to be untrue.

Enraged, the Bush Administration leaks that Valerie Plame (Wilson's wife, played with angry intensity by Naomi Watts) is a CIA agent, in order to discredit Wilson's allegation. Plame is dismissed from the agency, leaving her overseas team in danger and her marriage in trouble.

But Wilson ultimately persuades her to help fight the White House, and Plame testifies before a Congressional committee. After one White House staffer, "Scooter" Libby, is convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice, George Bush commutes his sentence.

The film is rated PG-13, runs 108 minutes with more tension than you would expect. It led to an animated discussion about speaking truth to power, forgiveness and transformation as well as politics.

Greg Plant

Tue Jan 3, 2012**10am - 11am Worship & Music Ministry, Pastor's Study**

Worship & Music Ministry monthly meeting on the first Tuesday of the month.

Wed Jan 4, 2012**2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 5, LDS Church, Palo Alto 1st Ward, Fellowship Hall**

Volunteer team that cooks, serves and cleans up after dinner for our local homeless, organized through First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto and the Urban Ministry of Palo Alto. Each team commits to serving in a five-week rotation. Coordinator: Heidi. Dinner at 5pm.

Sun Jan 8, 2012**8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel**

Worship service of reflection and sharing.

9:15am - 10:15am Cluster Group Discussions, Fellowship Hall, Lounge, Classrooms

Re-imagining and Re-engaging Micah's Call: small group conversations with members of Council about future visions for our church community.

10:30am - 11:30am Community Worship Service, Sanctuary

Child care is provided. Children participate in the first 15 minutes of worship, leaving at 10:45 for educational classes. Communion is celebrated this Sunday. Please bring food to donate to the Palo Alto food closet.

5:30pm - 7pm Youth Group, Classroom 2

Contact Youth and Family Ministry Intern Rus Kosits for more information about Youth activities.

Tue Jan 10, 2012**12pm - 2pm Prime Timers, Fellowship Hall**

Rus Kosits, Seminary Intern for Children, Youth and Family Ministry will talk about current directions in Christian education and Youth and Family programs. Bring a bag lunch and cookies or other dessert treats to share.

7pm - 9:30pm Super Tuesday, Fellowship Hall

Ministry and Committee meetings start at 7pm in various rooms on the church campus. Come participate in the leadership and planning for our teaching ministry and facilities ministry.

Wed Jan 11, 2012**2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 1, Beth Jacob, Fellowship Hall**

Coordinator: Carol. Dinner at 5pm.

7pm - 8pm Cluster Group Discussions, Fellowship Hall, Classrooms

Re-imagining and Re-engaging Micah's Call: small group conversations with members of Council about future visions for our church community.

Sun Jan 15, 2012**8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel****9:15am - 10:15am Adult Study, Fellowship Hall****10:30am - 11:30am Community Worship Service, Sanctuary**

Please bring food to donate to the Palo Alto food closet.

11:30am - 12:30pm Cluster Group Discussions, Fellowship Hall, Lounge, Classrooms

Re-imagining and Re-engaging Micah's Call: small group conversations with members of Council about future visions for our church community.

5:30pm - 7pm Youth Group, Classroom 2**Wed Jan 18, 2012****2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 2, Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Fellowship Hall**

Coordinator: Rajesh Philipos. Dinner at 5pm.

Thu Jan 19, 2012**7pm - 8:30pm Deacons Meeting, Classroom 1**

Monthly meeting of the Deacons, on the 3rd Thursday of the month. The Board of Deacons is the primary caregiving leadership group for our church community.

Sun Jan 22, 2012**8:30am - 9:30am Early Church,****Chapel****9:15am - 10:15am Adult Study, Fellowship Hall****10:30am - 11:30am Community Worship Service, Sanctuary**

Please bring food to donate to the Palo Alto food closet.

5:30pm - 7pm Youth Group, Classroom 2**Wed Jan 25, 2012****2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 3, Etz Chayim, Fellowship Hall**

Coordinator: David. Dinner at 5pm.

4:30pm Press Deadline

Please send Press articles and news items to Lela Noble

(lnoble@sbcglobal.net) and Sarah Clementson (sclementson@fprensa.org)

7pm - 9:30pm Council Meeting, Classroom 1

Monthly meeting of Church Council on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Council is the operational leadership board for our church congregation.

Sun Jan 29, 2012**8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel****9:15am - 10:15am Adult Study, Fellowship Hall****10:30am - 11:30am Community Worship Service, Sanctuary**

Please bring food to donate to the Palo Alto food closet.

11:30am - 1pm Annual Meeting, Fellowship Hall

Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of the First Pres community of faith. Lunch will be provided, and donations for lunch will be accepted.

5:30pm - 7pm Youth Group, Classroom 2

First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto

1140 Cowper Street
Palo Alto, California
94301

We're on the Web!
www.fprespa.org



Our Mission Statement

The mission of First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto is to make our personal witness and public work consistent with the prophet Micah's challenge to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. As a community of faith, we center our communal life in worship and are challenged to live out the good news of the Gospel. Following Jesus the Christ, we pursue God's nonviolent vision of justice and human dignity for all people and share this understanding with our children, our members, our community, and the World.