

FIRST PRES PRESS



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PALO ALTO

WWW.FPRESPA.ORG

Inside This Issue:

Dear Ones,

Pastor's Letter	1
Worship Calendar	4
Other March Activities	4
Also Note...	7
Looking Back	8
Looking Ahead	8
Session Highlights	9
Deacons' Diary	9
Updates from Ministries, Small Groups, Committees, and Task Forces	10
Calendar	13

As I prepare for my upcoming Sabbatical, there is a burning question that has been both in my heart and in my head—and it is this: *What is the future of denominations?*

Phyllis Tickle, an insightful woman with whom I briefly had the pleasure of teaching at Warren Wilson College, has a new book out called *The Great Emergence*. In it she states that Christianity is currently undergoing a massive upheaval as part of a regular pattern that occurs every 500 years, in which old ideas are rejected and new ones emerge. Ultimately, the old expression of Christianity is refurbished and revitalized, while a new, more vital form also is created. (This is what Diana Butler-Bass alluded to during her time with us during the RMB Lectureship.) Tickle identifies these periodic upheavals as the Great Reformation, the Great Schism, the Great Decline and Fall, and the Great Transformation, and says they stretch back into Jewish history as well.

As founding editor of the religion department at *Publishers Weekly*, Tickle says this present Great Emergence means that the Christian church has entered a post-denominational mode. This sociological and cultural shift involves a distrust of all institutions and is forcing mainline Protestant Christianity to become less hierarchal and more communal. At the same time, she says, it offers an opportunity for Protestantism to renew and refine itself.

In a recent interview with *Faith & Leadership Magazine*, Tickle made the following observations which I found helpful and, I hope, you will find helpful as well:

Church Staff Contacts

Q: What will mainline denominations need to do to survive and thrive in the Great Emergence now before us?

If one were going to put one adjective to the Great Emergence, and thereby one adjective to emergence Christianity, one would say “deinstitutionalized.”

I’m Episcopalian, and I hear with the same sorrow as my fellow Anglicans that we’re shutting parishes every month now in the United States in the Episcopal Church. That’s alarming.

It’s not just that Christianity is changing. It’s the whole culture. Have you looked lately at the number of Rotary Clubs that aren’t anymore or the number of Kiwanis Clubs that aren’t anymore? American Legion? VFWs?

Institutionalization is being leveled. One of the characteristics of emergence thinking is there’s a flattening out.

Protestantism, because it came in a time of growing nation-states, became enormously hierarchal, and therefore the denominational structures that are standing right now are hierarchal. That’s not going to work in emergence times, or it’s going to have to change its configuration.

People under 40 right now have been born right smack-dab into a fully matured emergence, the Great Emergence. They can’t change their sensibilities any more than they can change the color of their eyes. They’re going to be non-hierarchal. They’re going to be afraid of institutions. They’re going to want to spread out horizontally. They want to be communal. They’re going to be actively involved in social justice as they define it, and not in the usual Protestant way. They are connected to the world. They’re “glocal” -- I hate that word -- but they think glocally. All of those things are sensibilities that

(650) 325-5659
Rob Martin x 102
 Head Pastor
rmartin@fprespa.org

Nan Swanson
 Pastor Emerita
nswanson@fprespa.org

Marissa Myers x 104
 Children & Family
mmyers@fprespa.org

Sarah Clementson x 100
 Church Administrator
sclementson@fprespa.org

Kaela Fine x 109
 Accounting
kfine@fprespa.org

Julie Barney x 105
 Pledge Accountant
jbarney@fprespa.org

Javier Hernandez
 Church Sexton
jhernandez@fprespa.org

Pastor's Letter—continued

are ingrained now; they have no choice.

There also is a kind of infiltration or, if you will, infection of emergence sensibilities in those 60 and 65 and over. It's like that Carol Burnett joke, "Kids and their grandparents get on so well because they have a common enemy." Well, in this case the common enemy is the age group in between -- the 40- to 45-year-olds and up to the 60- to 65-year-olds. In that generation -- which doesn't really have a name sociologically, so far as I know -- there is a huge need for denominational work and care right now.

The first thing that a denomination needs to turn its attention to is the pastoral care of a very significant and real need in that age group. Plus which, that age group is empowered enough financially so it's going to continue to support the institution. It values the institution, unlike the people at both ends of the stick who do not value the institution, who really want less of it.

The next thing that we need to talk about is that this upheaval that we're going through has what's called hyphenateds. They are the people who wish to keep -- for really deep emotional reasons -- the natal praxis in which they were formed, and infuse it with emergence sensibilities. What you get is Presby-mergents or Metho-mergents or Luther-mergents or Bap-mergents or Angli-mergents. What they're going to perpetuate is the tradition and not the institution. And that's tricky.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been perhaps the most adroit in moving between Scylla and Charybdis. The Episcopal Church is showing an increasing ability to do this. It's important to understand the denomination may never get anything out of it. But the tradition which the denomination has housed will indeed be carried on and carried forth into new permutations.

The third thing is that emergence Christianity is no more the perfect solution than is Protestantism or Roman Catholicism. It has flaws and faults.

I'm not an emergence Christian; I'm probably an Angli-mergent -- I've fooled with it long enough to have caught it. But I have colleagues who are pure emergence Christians who don't like for me to say this, but one of the things is that emergence praxis does not allow for much transcendence. It allows for transport -- and there's a difference.

What established church, be it Roman or Protestant, has is the place where prayers have been said for hundreds of years, places that have been honored with human words and human agony and human joys, where it is possible to move into a physical space that immediately takes you into the realm of prayer and worship. There is that emotional lift, that bonding with the larger human community over decades and decades, that denominations can offer and local churches can offer.

The next thing denominations are going to have to do is join forces with each other. Protestantism, whatever else its virtues are or were, is enormously divisive. That's got to stop. The concordat that now exists between the Lutheran church [ELCA] and the Episcopal Church is evidence in which they are sharing pulpits, sharing facilities, sharing parishioners, common ministry. That's a real step in the direction that things are going to go. There is a future out there, and the denominations are going to have to step into it.

Now, if I were a Methodist bishop, if I were a Presbyterian presbyter -- if I were in charge -- I would be doing some other things right now because of the emergence, and because it's liberating for Protestantism as well. It's liberating for the denominations.

Protestantism -- one of its hallmarks is divisiveness. One of its other hallmarks is deep intellectualism. The intellectual history of the last 500 years is strong testimony, incontestable testimony, to the worth of Protestant Christianity as it attempted to intellectualize the faith and to wrestle mentally with what was happening. We are sitting on the wealth of the Great Emergence because of Protestantism. Protestantism has both that tradition and that understanding among its people that it's all right to ask questions and to investigate, and it has the institutions that are already heavily endowed. Emergence Christianity is going to have to deal with some very serious and very intellectual questions.

Pastor's Letter—continued

The role of Protestantism is the role of restructuring what was good about the Protestant tradition, what is good about it, providing ongoing Protestant definition for those who still desire it. Then, after that, trim, trim, trim. The institution is going to shrink. It would be a smart denominational body that began to get rid of programs. Programs aren't going to get it.

Somebody's going to get hurt. Protestantism has an obligation -- as does Catholicism -- to help people through, and you help them through by educating them. This is the first time we've gone through one of these upheavals that we've known what was happening.

You start talking about atonement and those who have spent their lives on the Anselm theory, the penal substitution or the individualized heaven or the Sweet Jesus by-and-by -- they're going to be decimated. Educate, educate, educate at the congregational level. An informed parish is not fearful.

Q: What new Christian institutions could emerge out of all this?

Hopefully, none will. Protestants need to get rid of their real estate. Emergence Christians are allergic to real estate because, they will say, "The minute you own a piece of real estate, then you have to have somebody to clean it, then you have to have somebody to be sure that it gets clean, then you have to get somebody to be sure that it's insured, and the next thing you know, you've got a bishop." It's a hierarchy built-in, bound to happen.

If we mean institutional in that way, don't do that. If we mean institutions in the philosophic way, emergence Christianity is going to organize a little like an anthill.

Steven Johnson wrote a marvelous book called "Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software," which everybody should read who's talking about this.

"Emergence" is an unfortunate term. It came out of emergence theory in the biology lab. For centuries we had thought that a beehive and an anthill were the same thing. Both had a queen, and it worked top down. In the middle of the 19th century, scientists discovered, "Wrong; au contraire."

They both have queens because we elected to put that label on them, and the bee queen is indeed a force to be dealt with. She does order everybody around.

However, the ant queen is only good for one thing, and that's making babies. Anthills are built without anybody in charge. There is nobody in charge. They work by pheromones, in which one ant will say, "Food, I smell food," and everybody comes picking up the scent, and then there's garbage, and somebody says, "Garbage detail" with an odor, and the garbage goes out. I'm being silly, but that's what emergence theory is.

Emergence theory was taken by sociologists and used to describe ways of human organization. Whatever happens is going to be this way -- it's going to be an anthill.

One of the accommodations being made by Protestantism to emergence is the increasing use of bi-vocational pastors. An emergence gathering can be as few as six or eight people gathered in a home. The majority of them are small. I would say 35 and under folk, probably, gathering. That kind of group cannot afford a clergyperson.

There are accommodations in place now to allow a clergyperson to serve some five or six such groups and hope to arrive at something like a salary, but the better mode for it is to use your bi-vocationals.

There are accommodations being made in every way. But institutions? The very word is suspect. It's an iffy thing.

May we be open to anthill-thought in the midst of the New Emergence all around us—and may we be ever-open to new ways of being in ministry in this particular place and time!

Much peace,

Rob

Worship Schedule for March 2011

Sunday, March 6th—Communion Celebrated at the 10:30 Service

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
9:15 A.M.	Adult Study in Fellowship Hall
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship in the Sanctuary
10:45 A.M.	Children's Educational Classes
11:30 A.M.	Congregational Meeting
11:45 A.M.	Coffee / Fellowship in the Courtyard / Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, March 9th—Ash Wednesday

The Sanctuary will be open from 10:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. for silent reflection and the imposition of ashes.

Sunday, March 13th—First Sunday in Lent

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
9:15 A.M.	Adult Study in the Fellowship Hall / Lounge
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship in the Sanctuary (Joys & Concerns)
10:45 A.M.	Children's Educational Classes
11:30 A.M.	Coffee / Fellowship in the Courtyard / Fellowship Hall

Sunday, March 20th—F.L.O.W. Sunday—Abundant Life in East Palo Alto

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
-----------	----------------------------

NO ADULT STUDY OR CHURCH SCHOOL—SEE F.L.O.W. SUNDAY SCHEDULE BELOW

Sunday, March 27th—Third Sunday in Lent

8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
9:15 A.M.	Adult Study in the Fellowship Hall / Lounge
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship in the Sanctuary (Joys & Concerns)
10:45 A.M.	Children's Educational Classes
11:30 A.M.	Coffee / Fellowship in the Courtyard / Fellowship Hall

Other March Activities

F.L.O.W. SUNDAY –MARCH 20th To Benefit the **BREAD OF LIFE Ministry** in East Palo Alto

On Sunday, March 20th, we will have our fourth F.L.O.W. Sunday (standing for Faith Lived Out in the World). We will be worshipping and working alongside members of the Bread of Life Ministry, and we will offer some much needed support for their ministry through renovations to their worship center.

A non-denominational, non-traditional Christ-centered church, Bread of Life performs evangelistic community outreach in parks and on street corners in East Palo Alto and surroundings. Its leadership oversees the day-to-day operations of the East Palo Alto Warming Shelter and also does outreach in prisons and hospitals. The Ministry was founded by Rev. Mary Frazier. All are welcome to Bread of Life worship services, including the homeless in the community.

Other March Activities—continued

The schedule for Sunday, March 20th, is as follows:

8:30 a.m.	Early Church in the First Pres Chapel
9:30 a.m.	Carpools leave from the front of the church to the Bread of Life Worship Center, located at 1852 Bay Road in East Palo Alto
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Worship Service
12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Lunch and Work Preparation
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Work on the facility—painting / clean-up

This F.L.O.W. Sunday is being organized by our Social Justice Ministry—so please be on the look out for further details on how you can participate in this meaningful outreach into our community.

Holly Brady

ADULT STUDY

9:15-10:15 A.M.

March 6: Rob Martin speaking on plans for his sabbatical and how it will benefit the church

Lenten Adult Study – 5-Week Series Starts March 13th

We will offer two excellent sessions!

A. A Study of *Original Blessing* by Matthew Fox: Exploring Together a Creative and Transformative Spirituality—Mohan Iyer

Creation Spirituality is a rather dated idea and the iconic book – Matthew Fox’s *Original Blessing* – was published in the early 80s. So, why is it worth studying today? Fox calls this a “liberation theology for first world peoples,” and I found it quite relevant to many of the issues we wrestle with today at First Pres. We are still in need of a vibrant and robust spirituality that breaks the duality of heart and mind, one that promotes our unabashed enjoyment of the great goodness in God’s created cosmos while allowing complete room for sin, pain, lament, and letting go. We desire a spirituality that empowers us to co-create and transforms us to the consciousness and riches of royal personhood in Christ. While I am no expert in these matters, I have read Fox’s book (once you read it too, you’ll know as much as I do!) and would like to experientially explore with you some of these ideas and themes in 5 sessions as follows:

March 13th: An intro to creation spirituality and its 4 paths

March 27th: Path 1, Via Positiva

April 3rd: Path 2, Via Negativa

April 10th: Path 3, Via Creativa

April 27th: Path 4, Via Tranformativa

Copies of *Original Blessing* are available in the Narthex before and after church for \$15.00.

B. The Resurrection and the Life—Vicky Greenbaum

What does resurrection mean to you? How have thinkers, believers, feelers created meaning around the resurrection in the past? Join this adult study for five sessions of exploration, reading, and conversation around this vital topic! We'll read from various texts including scripture, Marcus Borg, NT Wright, and others. We'll discuss our own views, and listen with open minds and gentle hearts to the views of others. Resurrection need not be negative, conflict-laden, oppressive. We can find the life in resurrection, if we bring the loving approach of Jesus and

Other March Activities—continued

our own hearts to the topic as we consider the difficult and also the simple aspects of this area of Christian thought. We'll engage our minds and hearts as we follow the outline below:

- March 13th:** Resurrection: centuries of thought
- March 27th:** Resurrection as triumph over death
- April 3rd:** Resurrection and creation: vitally connected
- April 10th:** Resurrection and transformation
- April 17th:** The heart of resurrection

Book Cart - Always Available Learning Resources!

Need a good book to read? Each week the book cart in the narthex offers the latest in stimulating books for you to check out and enjoy. Just sign the book out when you take it--and sign it back in when you return it.

John Zlatnik

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Godly Play:

Why It Matters and What We're Doing About It

After much prayer, learning and consultation, we are extending our Godly Play classroom to older elementary age children. I believe that Godly Play is the best-kept secret at our church -- and perhaps in children's ministry today.

"Godly Play" is an approach to children's spiritual formation that is based on creating a sacred space in which to present the stories of our faith, wonder about them together, and then allow children open-ended opportunities, usually with art supplies, to engage the story on their own terms. The Godly Play movement was founded by an Episcopal priest, but is used in many denominations.

I have seen Godly Play rejuvenate a children's program at a small Presbyterian church in Oakland, drawing more and more kids to its classroom. Godly Play holds great potential for the spiritual lives of our kids (and is deeply satisfying for adults who engage the stories, too).

Heather Titterton has been a guiding light in Godly Play for this congregation, leading young children in this experience for several years. We owe Heather and Pat Kinney a debt of gratitude for creating and sustaining a Godly Play space in Classroom 1. We have now retrofitted Classroom 1 with age-appropriate lessons for older elementary kids. We hope to make the transition to Godly Play in early Spring.

Our church school leaders and interested others had the opportunity to observe Godly Play in action at three local area churches on February 27, including St. Mark's in south Palo Alto. Afterwards, we ate lunch together and participated in an orientation with Sally Mancini. Sally is the Godly Play guru who trained Heather in this approach, and has trained other Godly Play leaders across the peninsula. We will continue our training with Sally next month.

In their Godly Play debriefing with Sally, participants called out these things:

WHAT THEY LIKED BEST

- the storytelling
- how the story box was treated with reverence, cherished, special
- no pressure to perform, felt safe
- slow pace
- a sense of "settled-ness"

WHAT THEY FELT WAS MOST IMPORTANT

- being valued
- feeling comfortable
- orderliness
- personal connection
- openness in wondering

WHERE THEY FELT MOST ENGAGED:

- the wondering time
- the prayer
- the unveiling

Marissa Myers

Other March Activities—continued

PRIME TIMERS

Noon to 2 p.m., Tuesday, March 8, in Fellowship Hall

Gospel Music



Whether it's swaying with choirs or toe-tapping along with quartets or clapping our hands to the rhythm of soul-stirring crooners, gospel is one genre of music that needs to be both seen and heard. This overview includes a number of audio and video recordings of performances by such luminaries as Mahalia Jackson, Sam Cooke, and Marion Williams. It also explores the social/historical

contexts and development of gospel music from its origins in the rural South to its "Golden Age" in the 1930s-1950s to the more activist Civil Rights era to a Contemporary Gospel influenced by pop and Latin music.

As an informed and enthusiastic fan of gospel music, Jeff Grinnell has produced six "Glory & the Gift of Hope" gospel concerts. Long an avid collector of LPs, tapes, and CDs, he originally focused on blues, soul music, and jazz. It was during his work as primary selector of music CDs for the San Mateo County Library's 12 branches that his interest in gospel really took off.

All are invited. Bring your own bag lunch and cookies or cakes or fruit to share. Coffee and tea provided. Contact Don Fidler if you have any questions.

Ellen Forbes

Also Note

SENIOR CHATS

The participation of people from five local churches makes for diverse and stimulating conversation. Also, we try to explore subjects that may be new for us - thus stretching our mental capacity. Please join us and bring your friends for two interesting health-related presentations in March. No RSVP is necessary. If you have questions, please call Rev. Dona Smith-Powers, 650-494-3093. We meet at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 670 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto, in the Fireside Room.

March 11 - "Laughter is the shortest distance between two people," said Victor Borge. Also, we read in Proverbs 17:22: "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Laughter is healthy for body and mind and has a way of healing our attitudes and misconceptions about ourselves and others. Join us as John Lehman, Executive Director of Senior New Ways, leads us in a discussion and experience with this valuable subject.

March 25 - What is Feldenkrais? Jean Elvin, Palo Alto practitioner, will enlighten us about this valuable method of awareness of our movement, helping us to access the power of our nervous system. Students speak of having improved flexibility, posture, and balance. Many have said that this method has brought new ways of moving, renewed awareness of how muscles work together, and regained confidence in how the body works.

NEWS FROM THE DAY WORKER CENTER



The Day Worker Center of Mountain View thanks you for your support! As many of you know, we are a non-profit where day workers can find fair employment with dignity. Thanks to the support of our friends from the community, we were able to move into our new home on 113 Escuela Avenue last November. It has been wonderful having our own space. We are now open longer, have more English and computer classes, and frequently host events at our center. None of this could be possible without your support.

If you would like to become more involved with the Day Worker Center, there are plenty of opportunities. One way is to hire a worker for any projects you may have around the house. We have workers skilled in housecleaning, yard work, construction, painting, moving, and anything else you need. Another way to become involved is by volunteering. Opportunities include, but are not limited to, English classes, computer classes, job skills training, translation, tutoring, grant writing, graphic design, and job development. We are also open to expanding our current programs and want to talk to you if your interest does not lie in one of the above categories. Speaking Spanish is a plus, but not required. Contact us for more details: 650-903-4102 or info@dayworkercentermv.org We are open Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you would like to become more involved with the Day Worker Center, there are plenty of opportunities. One way is to hire a worker for any projects you may have around the house. We have workers skilled in housecleaning, yard work, construction, painting, moving, and anything else you need. Another way to become involved is by volunteering. Opportunities include, but are not limited to, English classes, computer classes, job skills training, translation, tutoring, grant writing, graphic design, and job development. We are also open to expanding our current programs and want to talk to you if your interest does not lie in one of the above categories. Speaking Spanish is a plus, but not required. Contact us for more details: 650-903-4102 or info@dayworkercentermv.org We are open Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Kate Mallison, Volunteer Coordinator

Looking Back



Dr. Mohamad Rajabally chats with First Pres folks after one of the sessions he offered during Adult Study. Over the course of his six presentations, he explored many of the basic beliefs of Islam and its adherents in our world today, including issues pertaining to Muslim women and the response of American Muslims to current political challenges.

Photo by Holly Brady



Scenes from the Reverend Victor Floyd's ordination into the MCC church here at First Pres on Saturday, February 12th.



Looking Ahead



CROP WALK DETAILS

When: Sunday, April 3, 2011
Time: 1:00 p.m., Registration; 1:30 p.m., Walk
Where: Lincoln High School in San Jose

Routes: 1 mile or 5 miles through a beautiful neighborhood around the San Jose Rose Garden

This year will be the 34th anniversary of the Bay Area CROP (Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty) Hunger Walk. The purpose is to raise awareness about people around the world who must **walk** for water, firewood, and other necessities of life and to raise funds to help stop hunger wherever it exists. 25% of the money raised through the Bay Area walk will stay in Santa Clara County helping Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties and Sacred Heart Community Service.

We will be taking sign-ups for walkers and contributions on March 20th & 27th. OR to join our team and/or to make a contribution on line, go to <http://www.fprespa.org/> ; select upcoming and follow the link to the CROP Walk. Consider joining us! Questions? Contact Joy Sleizer (joysleizer@sbcglobal.net) or Melissa Kirven-Brooks (melissa@kirvenbrooks.org).

Session Highlights

The main accomplishment of the February 23rd Session meeting was passage of the budget for calendar year 2011. It was decided that we should start doing regular annual draws from the Legacy Fund. This had been the practice in the past, but it was put on hold for the last two years due to the difficult economic situation. Many Elders feel that it is time to once again use the Legacy funds for the purpose that the donors intended, so the draw will be reinstated. We will also use the Legacy Fund to pay for Rob Martin's substitute, Bob Butziger, while he is on sabbatical. Staff Relations brought a recommendation for increases to the staff's compensation, as they had not had an increase in 3 years. The request was enthusiastically approved.

Some other changes from last year's budget are an increase of \$1500 to the Robert McAfee Brown lecture funding and an increase of \$1000 to the Adult Study budget. The final major change is the addition of a line in the budget for FLOW Sundays with funding of \$4000 for that category. The remaining budget categories are roughly the same as in 2010, and the budget as approved will leave us with a surplus of \$633 at year-end.

Helene Butler, Clerk of Session, brought a request from Craig and Elaine McCreight to be removed from the membership roll of First Pres, which was approved unanimously, with regret. She also brought a request for transfer of membership from Mike Batek and Sara Kole to Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church. While we are sorry to lose Mike and Sara as members, we are happy that they have found another church home.

Helene Butler

NOTE: There is no Finance report this month because the budget cannot be finalized until the congregation has approved Rob's Terms of Call.

FIRST PRES EMPLOYMENT AND TERMINATION PROCESS

In order to clear up some misconceptions that became apparent when reading Rob's reviews, the members of Session would like to clarify the process that is involved in the employment and termination of the lay staff at First Presbyterian Church, Palo Alto.

The Staff Relations committee makes all recommendations regarding employment and terminations to Session, which then votes on the recommendation. Staff Relations also undertakes all staff reviews, with input from other staff, church leaders and congregation members.

Rob Martin, as Senior Pastor, is the Head of Staff. Rob's input is a vital part of the employee review process, but he does not have the final say in either employment or termination. Those decisions can only be approved by Session after a recommendation from Staff Relations. Rob cannot, of his own accord, either hire or terminate an employee.

FEBRUARY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Date	Early Service	10:30 Service	TOTAL
2/6	11	107	118
2/13 ANNUAL MTG	9	85	94
2/20	13	102	115
2/27	10	75	85

Total for Month of February: 412

Deacons' Diary

Who is my deacon? At First Pres we have a Board of 9 Deacons **reorganized** into 9 neighborhoods; each Deacon is assigned one neighborhood. The new church directory will show neighborhood assignments to the right of each entry. Call the church office if you are uncertain of your neighborhood number. The deacons thank **Pat Kinney** for taking on the task of creating 9 new groups.

#1 Redwood City and north: Ellen Perry

#2 Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley, East Palo Alto: Jim Hewlett

#3 Stanford, Palo Alto (west of Alma, north of Page Mill): Trish Hallenbeck

#4 Palo Alto (west of Alma, south of Page Mill): Mary Alice Thornton

#5 Palo Alto (Alma to Middlefield, north of Oregon): Pat Levin

#6 Palo Alto (Alma to Middlefield, south of Oregon):

Margaret Tompkins

#7 Palo Alto (east of Middlefield): Pat Kinney

#8 Mountain View, Los Altos, Sunnyvale: Ian and Val Mallace

#9 South Bay and East Bay: Hwaja Choi

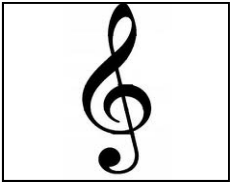
Food Closet Donations

The Deacons decided at their February meeting to discontinue the past practice of assigning one month to each neighborhood to bring donations to the Food Closet. We agreed it is better for the entire congregation to be aware of the need for donations each and every week. We thank **Ellen Forbes** for her weekly email reminders of particular needs.

Mary Alice Thornton

Updates from Ministries, Small Groups, Committees, and Task Forces

MUSIC PROGRAM TASK FORCE—FEBRUARY REPORT



Our First Pres Music Task Force includes Greer Ellison, Vicky Greenbaum, Mohan Iyer, and Dave Rogers, meeting with Sarah Clementson (records and spreadsheets) and Rob Martin (pastor). We meet regularly to work on discerning a way forward for our overall music program. Our deliberations and discernment efforts will take some time, because we want to avoid rushing and making mistakes. We, along with the congregation, strongly desire a music ministry that meets the spiritual and musical needs of us all. To help understand the needs at First Pres, we have surveyed the choir, and now we're sending forth this survey to the congregation:

1. What have you perceived to be the strengths and weaknesses of our music program over the years you've been attending First Pres?
2. What particular musical styles and liturgical art forms do you favor in the context of worship?
3. Our past model of the music program has relied on an organist/choir director whose primary focus has been to work with the adult choir. If the church leadership were to change this model and broaden the job description, how would you like the overall music and arts program expanded? Guest musicians? Concerts? Drama? Dance? Art?
4. If, in response to this survey, there is a broad diversity of opinion regarding the future direction of the music program, the Music Task Force will in good faith recommend to Session a direction that they see as serving the common good. Do you agree or disagree with this approach to decision making? Please circle one below, and write more if you wish.
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - If you disagree, what would be an alternative approach?

Surveys will be placed in the bulletin and also sent out online via the FPres Yahoo server. Please respond, either online or in writing, by **March 15**; you can email your response to Sarah Clementson, at sclementson@fprespa.org, or you can place your written response in the box provided in the narthex; you can also hand your response to a member of the Task Force.



FOUR PLUS THREE SPRING HIKES

First Pres Hikers Covenant Group

- Mar 26, Sat - Coal Mine Ridge (Don)
 Apr 16, Sat - Edgewood County Park (Don)
 May 7, Sat - San Bruno Mountain State & County Park (Julie)
 June 11, Sat - Santa Cruz area (location to be determined by Paul Seever at a later date)

Sierra Club Hikes

- Apr 2, Sat - Rancho Canada del Oro (Julie)
 May 21, Sat - Russian Ridge OSP (Julie)
 Jun 9, Thu - Wunderlich County Park to Alice's Restaurant on Skyline Blvd (Julie)

For more information and reservations, contact hike leaders:

- Don Hildenbrand (650)968-4227 donhilden@att.net
 Julie Barney (650)494-2020
 Paul Seever (831)440-9018 pseever@prodigy.net

FILM REVIEW: "The Great Debaters" (2007)



Based on a true story, "The Great Debaters" is set at Texas' Wiley College where, in 1935-36, Professor Melvin Tolson (Denzel Washington, who also directed the film) coached the debate team to a nearly undefeated season. That season saw the first debate between U.S. students from white and African-American colleges and eventually culminated in a competition against Harvard University's national champions, debating the proposition "Civil Disobedience is a moral weapon in the fight for justice." Wiley's team of four debaters - including a female and the young James Farmer, Jr. (who later founded CORE) - was confronted by racism, a lynching, and the arrest of their coach for labor organizing. Through life experience and the discipline of debate, these young people found their voices. The film provokes thought about the particular role of education for African-Americans at the time, the role of radical action in pursuit of justice, and the question of how we make moral decisions.

Rated PG-13, 126 minutes

Shirley Eglington

Updates...continued

NOTES FROM THE COOL PLANET WORKING GROUP



The last Cool Planet Working Group featured a guest speaker, Jess Chamberlain, who spoke to us about her recent article in *Sunset* magazine – “The Zero Waste Home.” This article was the most controversial (and most read) in recent history. To read the article, go to

<http://www.sunset.com/home/natural-home/zero-waste-home>

Some highlights of the talk:

1. **Simplifying, de-cluttering, and having less** can lead to a greater sense of emotional well being.
2. **REFUSE, reduce, reuse, rot (compost), recycle.** Refuse to let clutter into your life by considering the packaging, shopping at thrift stores, getting off mailing lists.... Recycling is better than throwing away, but it also requires energy, so try the other options first.
3. **Regift.** If you have something you are no longer using that a friend might enjoy, why not wrap it in a nice piece of cloth and present it. Also recommended are “**experiential**” gifts, such as special outings, tickets, memberships... .
4. **Books come from the library** and return there - a great zero waste strategy! DVD’s are streamed or rented from Netflix. Newspapers and magazines can be read online.
5. **Shop at farmer’s markets** for “sticker-free” produce and bring your own containers (glass jars, cloth bags) to grocery stores.
6. **Be proactive** – write to companies with complaints about packaging and get off junk mail lists using www.dmachoice.org and www.catalogchoice.org.



I think all of us have been busy de-cluttering ever since the talk!

Some of our upcoming projects:

Mar 13 - Meet with the Confirmation Class on the topic of Earth Care theology and ethics

Apr 10 - Lead the Earth Day Worship Service

Apr 19 - Meet with Progressive Christian Community at Stanford to discuss climate justice

Apr/May – date TBD – Host a screening of the film “Climate Refugees”

Ongoing – Work with Save the Bay to protest the Cargill project to develop the Redwood City wetlands (Contact Linda Busek or Shirley Eglington if you would like to help with this.)

There’ll be a meeting of the Cool Planet Group on Sunday, **March 6, from 11:45 a.m. until 1 p.m.** in the Lounge. If you are interested in working on issues of climate justice, please join us.

Pat Kinney

Cultural Development and Enhancement Project Opportunity to be part of it!



Twenty of us including 10 students from Stanford University are going on the South Bay Sanctuary Covenant March 2011 delegation to El Salvador. We are raising money to help people in our partner community Comunidad Octavio Ortiz and the other 28 communities of the United Communities of the Lower Lempa River enhance their cultural development.

This project is a top priority for the United Communities. All of the 29 communities were formed after the civil war that ravaged El Salvador for over 12 years (1980 – 1992). These communities are rural and poor and lack adequate access to health care and education. Local youth are especially vulnerable to outside influences and some want to leave. Communities want to ensure that youth are aware of their identity, proud of their culture, and will stay and be good citizens.

The project has four goals:

- Improve the abilities of local citizens to understand and experience their culture;
- Create open spaces that encourage independent civic participation at the local and national levels;
- Increase the knowledge of culture in the Lower Lempa;
- Decrease the influence of the materialistic culture around fashion and mega projects.



Activities under the project will include developing and strengthening local programs that promote theatre, dance, music, art, and other areas, as well as conserve their cultural heritage through documentation, historical memory projects, and a cultural study. This will include a mural in our partner community.

Will you please help us with this wonderful community project?

Our goal is \$3,000. This will be TRIPLED by 2 Canadian support groups.

Please make a tax deductible check to University Lutheran/SBSC and mail to
South Bay Sanctuary Covenant
3290 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, CA 94306

We welcome prayers and/or positive thoughts that we may be channels of God's love and justice and help bring liberation from the chains of oppression.

Wed Mar 2, 2011**2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 1, Beth Jacob, Fellowship Hall**

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

Sun Mar 6, 2011**8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel**

Worship service of prayer, reflection and sharing

9:15am - 10:15am Adult Study Classes, Fellowship Hall

Adult study topics are taught in multi-week series on a variety of topics. Come to listen, learn and share in thought-provoking discussions

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 typically celebrated on the first Sunday of the month. Please bring food to donate to the Palo Alto food closet

10:45am - 11:45am Children & Youth Educational Classes, Classrooms

Children and youth leave Community Worship at 10:45 to attend one-hour educational classes. Parents are asked to pick up their children at 11:45

11:30am Congregational Meeting, Sanctuary

The congregation must vote on the terms of call for Pastor Rob Martin

11:30am Coffee/Fellowship, Courtyard/Fellowship Hall

All are welcome for conversation following the Community Worship service.

11:45am Cool Planet Working Group meeting, Lounge

This group gathers monthly to plan activities related to the environment.

Tue Mar 8, 2011**12pm - 2pm Prime Timers, Fellowship Hall**

Bring a bag lunch and cookies or other dessert treats to share

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

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, community building activities, finance and facilities ministries

Wed Mar 9, 2011**10am - 3pm Sanctuary open for Ash Wednesday Reflection****2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 2, Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Fellowship Hall**

Coordinator: Rajesh Philipos. Dinner at 5pm

Sun Mar 13, 2011**8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel****9:15am - 10:15am Adult Study Classes, Fellowship Hall****10:30am - 11:30am Community Worship Service, Sanctuary**

Please bring food to donate to the Palo Alto food closet

10:45am - 11:45am Children & Youth Educational Classes, Classrooms**11:30am Coffee/Fellowship, Courtyard/Fellowship Hall****Wed Mar 16, 2011****2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 3, Ets Chayim, Fellowship Hall**

Coordinator: David. Dinner at 5pm

7pm - 8:30pm Deacons Meeting, Classroom 1

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

Thu Mar 17, 2011**10:30am - 11:30am Worship & Music Ministry, Pastor's Study**

Worship & Music Ministry monthly meeting on the 3rd Thursday of the month

Sun Mar 20, 2011**8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel****9:30am F.L.O.W. Sunday, Leave for Abundant Life Worship Center**

1852 East Bay Road, East Palo Alto; 10:00 a.m. worship service followed by lunch, and community service work at the Center from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Wed Mar 23, 2011**2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 4, First Pres, Fellowship Hall**

Coordinators: Joy, Derrick and Craig. Dinner at 5pm

4:30pm First Pres Press Deadline

Please send Press articles and news items to Lela Noble

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

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

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

Sun Mar 27, 2011**8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel****9:15am - 10:15am Adult Study Classes, Fellowship Hall****10:30am - 11:30am Community Worship Service, Sanctuary**

Please bring food to donate to the Palo Alto food closet

10:45am - 11:45am Children & Youth Educational Classes, Classrooms**11:30am Coffee/Fellowship, Courtyard/Fellowship Hall****Wed Mar 30, 2011****2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 5, LDS Church, Palo Alto 1st Ward, Fellowship Hall**

Coordinator: Heidi. Dinner at 5pm

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.