

FIRST PRES PRESS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PALO ALTO



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"Money is like fire, an element as little troubled by moralizing as earth, air, and water. People can employ it as a tool, or they can dance around it as if it were the incarnation of a god. Money votes socialists or monarchists, finds a profit in pornography or translations of the Bible, commissions Rembrandt and underwrites the technology of Auschwitz . . . Money acquires its meaning from the uses to which it is put."

Lewis H. Lapham, Editor of *Harper's Magazine*

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Gospel of Matthew 6:21

Dear Ones,

The topic of money often makes me feel uncomfortable—especially when I have to talk about money in the context of a faith community. God knows that requests to tap into your own financial recourses are abundant, and the choices between well-meaning ventures and worthy causes can be overwhelming. But I do believe, as Lewis H. Lapham states, that money acquires its meaning from the uses to which it is put. Our money can easily underwrite things that are helpful or hurtful. Our treasures can support causes that are con-structive or de-structive. Our financial resources can be used in grace-filled or greed-filled ways. The choice is ours to make.

These kinds of financial decisions are woven into the very fabric of our faith experience—and hopefully our faith experience has a direct impact on our financial choices—for as Jesus said to his followers as they worked together in ministry, *"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also!"* Our giving, our stewardship, as a church, should occur not out of guilt but rather out of gratitude—gratitude for the welcoming voice of this congregation over the years in a society where shouts of hate and hurt are too often present; gratitude for the history of watchful eyes in this faith community in a world where injustice and inequity are too often hidden from view; gratitude for the continued commitment to compassionate care in this church for those who are sick, or scared, or who have been side-lined by public policies and practices; gratitude for the promises this congregation has made to the children in its care in the midst of a Church culture that would too readily teach them the rule of law rather than the rule of love; and gratitude for all of the diverse and dedicated individuals that have informed and continue to form this blessed body known as First Presbyterian Church, Palo Alto.

Gratitude moves mountains! *Not* mountains of stone but rather mountains of doubt . . . mountains of fear . . . even mountains of limitation! As you have seen in the past, and hopefully will see in the future, we can accomplish incredible things when our resources are pooled together out of gratitude for all we have been given!

During this season of stewardship may each of us find ourselves renewed by, and recommitted to, the work and witness of this community of faith. May our money acquire meaning from the uses we put it to as the body of Christ in this place and time. And may we continue to remember that where we gratefully place our treasures, there will our hearts be also!

Peace to you and yours,

W. Robert (Rob) Martin, III

P.S. Please mark your calendars for the **Stewardship Luncheon** on **Sunday, November 13th** immediately following our 10:30 Service—and be sure to bring your **Pledge Card** on **Sunday, November 20th** as we consecrate our communal gifts during worship.

Church Staff Contacts

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 Church Sexton

Worship Schedule for November/December/First Week of January

Sunday, November 13th

8:30 A.M. Early Church in the Chapel
 9:15 A.M. Adult Study
 10:30 A.M. Community Worship Service in the Sanctuary
 10:45 A.M. Children's Classes
 11:30 A.M. Stewardship Luncheon in Fellowship Hall
 5:30 P.M. Youth Group in Classroom 2

Sunday, November 20th

8:30 A.M. Early Church in the Chapel
 9:15 A.M. Adult Study
 10:30 A.M. Community Worship Service in the Sanctuary
 10:45 A.M. Children's Classes
 11:30 A.M. Coffee/Fellowship in Fellowship Hall
 5:30 P.M. Youth Group in Classroom 2

Sunday, November 27th

First Sunday in Advent

8:30 A.M. Early Church in the Chapel
 9:15 A.M. Adult Study
 10:30 A.M. Community Worship Service in the Sanctuary—Rus Kosits Preaching
 10:45 A.M. Children's Classes
 11:30 A.M. Coffee/Fellowship in Fellowship Hall
 5:30 P.M. Youth Group in Classroom 2

Thursday, December 1st

Kara Candlelight Service 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 4th

Second Sunday in Advent

8:30 A.M. Early Church in the Chapel
 9:15 A.M. Adult Study
 10:30 A.M. Community Worship Service in the Sanctuary
 10:45 A.M. Children's Classes
 11:30 A.M. Coffee/Fellowship in Fellowship Hall
 5:30 P.M. Youth Group in Classroom 2

Sunday, December 11th

Third Sunday in Advent

8:30 A.M. Early Church in the Chapel
 9:15 A.M. Adult Study
 10:30 A.M. Community Worship Service in the Sanctuary
 10:45 A.M. Children's Classes
 11:30 A.M. Coffee/Fellowship in Fellowship Hall
 5:30 P.M. Youth Group in Classroom 2

Sunday, December 18th

Fourth Sunday in Advent

8:30 A.M. Early Church in the Chapel
 8:30 A.M. Christmas for Others in Fellowship Hall
 10:30 A.M. Community Worship and Christmas Pageant in the Sanctuary
 10:45 A.M. Children's Classes
 11:30 A.M. Coffee/Fellowship in Fellowship Hall

Saturday, December 24th

Christmas Eve

5:00 P.M. Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary
 6:15 P.M. Reception in Fellowship Hall
 11:30 P.M. Christmas Eve/Day Service and Communion in the Sanctuary

Worship Schedule—continued

Sunday, December 25 th	Christmas Day
8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
NO 10:30 A.M. SERVICE	
Sunday, January 1 st	New Year's Day
8:30 A.M.	Early Church in the Chapel
10:30 A.M.	Community Worship Service in the Sanctuary—Rus Kosits Preaching
11:30 A.M.	Coffee/Fellowship in Fellowship Hall

Other November Activities

ADULT STUDY

9:15-10:15 A.M.

November 13: Post Lectureship Discussion led by Evan Hughes in Fellowship Hall

November 20-December 11: Advent Series focusing on the lectionary readings of the week led by Rob Martin. Readings will be posted in advance. Come and explore more fully the message in the texts.

There is a possibility of a second series following up on the earlier Israel/Palestine series, but arrangements have not yet been finalized.

No Adult Study sessions are scheduled for December 18th and 25th or January 1st.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Children and Youth classes continue on Sunday mornings. Youth Group meets Sunday evenings at 5:30 p.m.

PRIME TIMERS: “On the Important Work of Kara”

Tuesday, November 8, 2011, Noon to 2 P.M.

Kara is the Gothic root of the word "care." It means to reach out, to care, to lament, to grieve with.

Kara provides compassionate support to people of all ages on their journey through grief so that they can move toward renewed hope and meaning. Clients include those who are grieving a death as well as those coping with a terminal illness (their own or another's).



Michael J. Donohue, Executive Director of Kara, brings over 20 years of executive management experience to KARA. He came to the nonprofit sector after a successful career in the consumer electronics field, where he honed his skills in client development, strategic planning and marketing. He has served as the Executive Director and Development Director for several nonprofits, including Operation Homefront, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, The ARC, Pacific Arts Center, and The Vijay Amritraj Foundation, where he launched the international foundation focused on helping the destitute of India. Most recently, he was an independent recruiter for senior staff positions in the tax and audit industry. Michael joined the Kara staff as Executive Director in the summer of 2011.

Next month: December 13. The *Gunn High School Chamber Singers* sing Holiday music in the sanctuary followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall. A donation will be requested.

Future program input required: The Prime Timers Steering Committee envisions a program on “Technology and Seniors.” We need your input now. What are the technologies that you use and love: Cellphone, email, soft-

Other November Activities—continued

ware, internet, Facebook, Twitter, Roomba, GPS, digital camera, CD/DVDs, Tivo, Comcast, plain old telephone? What do you love about them? What do you dislike? What are your frustrations? What would make life better? Do your grandchildren know more about technology than you? Please write down your specific comments and give them to Paul Jones or Don Fidler. And “stay tuned.”

Also Note

SENIOR CHATS

The Chat in November will be held on Friday, the 11th, in the Fireside Room of Covenant Presbyterian Church, 670 East Meadow Drive. We welcome new members to our friendly gathering, sharing light refreshments, light exercises, and a stimulating speaker. Our session starts at 10:00 A.M.

November 11: "What's It All About?" Our nation and its people are going through hard times, and we who love our nation will want to know exactly what is happening. As people of faith, we can't put our heads in the sand as we see the variety of responses of people who are hurting. Join us for a conversation about "Occupy Wall Street"—how it arose, what the issues are, and how the issues are coming together. As we become sensitive, we will better know how to HOPE and ACT. Paul George, Director of the Peninsula Peace and Justice Center, will lead us in our discussion.

November 25: Although we usually meet the second and fourth Fridays, this month we will not. Happy Thanksgiving!

For more information, call Rev. Dona Smith-Powers at 650-494-3093.

Looking Back

ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE ON ISRAEL/PALESTINE

An ecumenical conference sponsored by the Social Justice Ministry was held at our church on October 29th. Scores of church leaders heard in-depth presentations on the Israel/Palestine crisis and the growing gap between U. S. Middle East policy and the realities on the ground in Israel/Palestine. Organized by Geoff Browning, our Parish Associate and Peacemaking Advocate for the Presbytery of San Jose, and SJM Committee member Linda Busek and many others from the ecumenical community, the conference featured eight Middle East experts including Professors George Bisharat and Joel Beinin, from Berkeley and Stanford respectively. We also heard from Jews, Muslims, and a Palestinian Christian Lutheran Pastor.

Participants came from Methodist, Episcopal, United Church of Christ, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic congregations in the region.

The in-depth briefings covered the intolerable conditions of the 40-year Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands that both Muslims and Christians share as their homeland. Three rounds of five repeating workshops enabled participants to hear in-depth presentations on life in the occupied territory and the growing movement to impose boycotts, divestment, and sanctions to bring Israel to agree to a peaceful and just establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Obstructive movements such as Islamophobia and Christian Zionism were included in presentations.

A closing panel urged local congregations to increase their study and understanding of the issues, especially to use the Kairos Palestine document issued by Palestinian Christian church leaders that reviews the current conditions in Palestine and calls for non-violent solutions to the problems. We were also encouraged to travel to the region to increase our knowledge, understanding, and compassion for all the people who are suffering as a result of the occupation.

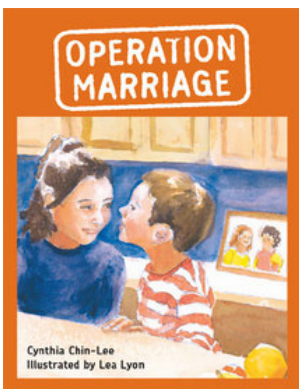
A second major ecumenical conference, called Sabeel, will be held on **March 23rd and 24th** at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church, bringing together national and international experts to brief Bay area faith leaders on the obstacles

Looking Back—continued

to peace in the Middle East. SABEEL is an ecumenical center in Jerusalem that helps Christians understand the Palestine issues.

OPERATION MARRIAGE - A FIRST PRESBYTERIAN PALO ALTO STORY

A friend and mentor taught Derrick and me that the shortest distance between two people is a story. No matter what your politics or religious beliefs, when someone tells you their story, that story can transform your thinking. When Cynthia Chin-Lee heard a story about the Merkle-Raymond family during a family covenant group gathering, it inspired her to get that story told in a bigger way... *Operation Marriage*. Throwing in a little extra drama and a gender-change (sorry, Nikki), Cyndi crafted a story about two kids who come up with a plan to convince their moms to get legally married during that brief window in California history when it was possible. Why? Some people didn't accept their moms as being "really married." This was especially true for Alex's best friend in the book, Zach, whose father was deeply opposed to gay marriage and a big supporter of Proposition 8. Will Alex and Nicky succeed in getting their moms to the altar? Will Proposition 8 pass? Will Zach make up with Alex and be her best friend again? You'll have to read the book to find out!



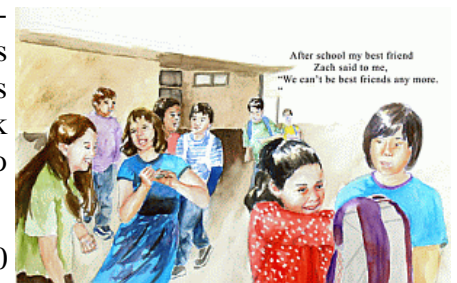
When Cyndi asked Craig and Derrick if Reach And Teach (our company) would like to publish the book. We were honored, but we also knew how expensive it would be to publish a full-color hardcover illustrated children's picture book. With the help of MicahsCall we raised the money needed. Who could we get to illustrate it? We had one dream on that front... Lea Lyon. Lea had illustrated one of our favorite books, *Playing War*. Our budget for illustrations, we knew, was about a quarter of what she normally could get for her work. Would she do it for that? Absolutely! Lea agreed immediately and she and Cyndi set to work on the illustration process. Lea has people model the scenes in a book, photographs them, does sketches from the photos, and then does watercolor paintings. One afternoon after worship Lea and Cyndi assembled a First Pres crew of models in the sanctuary and then at Cyndi's house. Almost everyone you see in the book is someone you can find at First Presbyterian Church Palo Alto.

A story inspired by a First Pres family, written by a First Pres author, published by a First Pres couple, with funding from an organization that First Pres inspired (thank you, Peter Wong) including donations from many First Pres individuals AND the social justice ministry, with all the characters in the book modeled by First Pres people.... this is truly a First Presbyterian Palo Alto Story!

On November 2nd at Keplers Bookstore the book had its big premier! Over 60 people attended, many from First Pres and many others from all over the place! One mom from Mountain View tearfully talked about how hard it was for her family to deal with homophobia and how much having a book like this meant to her. This story will help people to understand the harm done by prejudice, bad laws, and unwelcoming environments. Hopefully, the shortest distance between someone who does not support marriage equality and someone who does will be this story.

The book is available at Keplers, independent bookstores all over the country, and of course at www.reachandteach.com (and our shop in San Mateo or in the church parking lot after worship).

Thank you, First Presbyterian Church Palo Alto, for being a place where stories like this can happen, and dreams like *Operation Marriage* can come true.



Craig Wiesner

Looking Back—continued

LARRY RASMUSSEN: ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN LECTURESHIP



Over three days, November 4-6, First Pres and members of the wider community were led by Larry Rasmussen on a fascinating exploration of the emerging field of eco-theology and how intentional Christian stewardship is essential to the preservation of the planet.

Recognizing that the world we were born into isn't the world we inhabit today, Larry addressed themes of soil, water, sustainability, overconsumption and where the faith community fits into the big picture. Larry's gift is making the conversation real and accessible and opening our minds to possibilities. He also has the ability to write or find, and then to read with a poetic voice, great lines of prose and poetry that give insight and inspiration. The weekend was an incredible educational experience.



We appreciated his leadership, and we were very pleased that Nyla Rasmussen also was with us. Judy Zlatnik heroically headed the Lectureship Committee this year and provided attendees with the sacraments of bountiful food and drink from Friday night through Sunday morning. The Cool Planet Working Group facilitated Adult Study, outreach to other churches, hospitality, and publicity.

Next Up – You are invited to Adult Study November 13 to share your insights and give your feedback from the lectureship weekend experience. What did you glean from the discussions, and, importantly, where do we go from here? Come for the sharing 9:15–10:15 am in Fellowship Hall.

Also – First Pres's Cool Planet Working Group invites you to join them in an ongoing conversation about earth-honoring faith and plans for implementing the next steps. We meet next on Sunday, December 4, at noon.

Looking Ahead

CHRISTMAS FOR OTHERS is coming soon...



First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto has a long-standing Christmas tradition of partnering with Ecumenical Hunger Program (EHP) of East Palo Alto to provide gifts and food for families in need.

Each year we are given Wish Lists from 6-8 needy families, including children of all ages. From these, we create Giving Trees from which folks choose specific gift wishes to fulfill.

Children's gifts range from \$20-\$25 dollars. Family gifts are primarily food in the form of Safeway gift certificates.

Please watch for the Wish Lists and Giving Trees in the church narthex after Sunday services toward the end of November. Adopt a wish if you can!

This year, senior staffers at EHP visited FirstPres personally to underscore the fact that the need has been greatly multiplied due to a difficulty economy.

Thank you for all you do.

With Love and Peace,
Your CFO Coordinators

Holly Brady 650-858-6981 holly@hollybrady.com & Sally Nordlund 650-326-6510 sally_nordlund@msn.com

Looking Ahead—continued

It's that time of year again...



Celebrate the great work being done by organizations in our community and around the world at our annual **Holiday Peace & Social Justice Crafts & Info Fair!**

Date: Sunday, December 11th

Time: After church service until 2:30PM

Where: First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto - Fellowship Hall

Toys ~ Fair Trade Crafts ~ Books ~ Art ~ Music ~ DVDs ~ Games Puzzles ~ Jewelry ~ Decorations

- * Help promote fair trade while doing your holiday shopping!
- * Learn about great social justice & peacemaking organizations!
- * Reduce your carbon footprint this holiday season
- * Enjoy free holiday snacks & beverages



Sponsored by Peninsula Peace and Justice Center & First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto

Council Highlights

Meeting of October 26, 2011

As I mentioned last month, no, we did not create yet another committee! We are all trying to get into the habit of referring to the group formerly known as Session by our new name, which is Council. This is true throughout the Presbyterian Church USA and is one part of the changes that were instituted during this past summer.

Vicky Greenbaum, Social Justice (SJ) Ministry Chair, informed us that SJ has agreed to co-sponsor an event organized by Peninsula Peace and Justice on Saturday, January 14, 2012. The event is the Annual Martin Luther King Birthday Community Sing-Along. This celebration has taken place in the Fellowship Hall at First Presbyterian several times in the past. The program will run from 8:00 – 10:00 PM. All Elders were in consent and enthusiastically support the event. The Deacon rep to Session this month was Margaret Tompkins. She reported that since the Deacons have finished with Ingathering and are not quite ready to start planning for Christmas, they are happy to have some time to simply tend to the congregation's needs. They have also started doing some planning for Hotel de Zink for 2012.

Council discussed our supporting members of the congregation during their time at seminary. A motion was made to establish a policy of supporting seminary students who are members of the congregation by paying up to \$1200 annually for books. The requests will come through the Senior Pastor. The motion was approved unanimously. Rob also would like us to have a policy of having a Council liaison for any congregant attending seminary. This is actually required for those studying for an M.Div degree, but not for an M.A. A motion was made that Karen Peterson-Iyer and Sukgi Choi will have a rep from Council accompany them to meetings with the Presbytery Committee on Ministry. The motion passed unanimously.

Council approved a new date for November communion; we will switch from November 6th to the 13th. This motion was brought from the Worship Ministry, so that communion Sunday can coincide with the Stewardship luncheon.

Karen Wentzel, Chair of Staff Relations Ministry, gave us an update on staffing configuration plans in preparation for our November 12 retreat on that subject. The sub-committee working on the plans has met 3 times since the last Council meeting to develop something to present to Council. The sub-committee consists of Karen, Rob Martin, David Thornton, Karen Peterson-Iyer, Helene Butler, Vicky Greenbaum, and Kathy-Merkle-Raymond. We would like to re-engage with, re-present, and re-embodiment Micah's call and express that in our staffing. We need to have a vision for that, so we need to decide what our vision will be and what we would like to be as a

Council Highlights—continued

congregation. This needs to be balanced with who we are now, which presents a challenge! We look forward to focusing on this issue in retreat on the 12th and hope to bring our initial plan to the congregation for discussion soon thereafter.

Rob and Karen Wentzel informed us that a Shepherding Committee has been put in place for Rus Kosits. The members are Karen Wentzel, Beth Keller, and Craig Weisner.

Helene Butler, Clerk

Key Financial Highlights (Through September 30th)

Major Categories	Status <i>(Rounded actual compared to prorated budget)</i>
Pledge Income	☹ \$12,500 under budget
Total Congregational Giving	☹ \$24,700 under budget
Staff Compensation	☺ \$2,800 over budget
Administrative	☺ \$3,800 under budget
Facilities	☹ \$11,900 under budget
Presbyterian & Ecumenical Giving	☹ \$3,500 under budget
Social Justice	☹ \$7,200 under budget
Total Income	☹ \$40,200 under budget
Total Expenditures	☺ \$35,000 under budget
Income – Expenditures	☹ \$4,670 deficit

Financial Report Commentary

Income from Congregational Giving

Pledge income is down \$12,500 or 4% compared to our year-to-date budget. We encourage everyone to please keep pledge donations current. Donor-identified contributions are under budget by \$13,800, meaning that our overall Congregational Giving is \$25,000 below budgeted income for the nine months ended September 30th. If possible, please help us catch up on these sources of income over the next few months. Thank you all for your generosity and financial commitment to furthering the work and ministries of First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto.

Total Income

Total Income is \$40,200 under budget, which includes the Congregational Giving concern mentioned above. We plan to take a budgeted draw from the Legacy Circle Fund in November to help close the gap between our total income and total expenses. Year-to-date, we have taken only the first quarter's draw of \$12,120, as we have waited for improvement in economic and market conditions.

Expense Categories

Staff and Professional Expenses are \$2,800 over budget. That amount is less than 1% of the total year-to-date Staff and Professional Expense budget.

Facilities Expenses are \$11,900 under budget, reflecting continued deferred spending on repairs and church facility maintenance projects. We give thanks to Javier Hernandez, Church Sexton, and the members of the Fa-

Key Financial Highlights (Through September 30th)—continued

cilities Ministry team who handle most updates and repairs themselves. This is a major commitment of their personal time and talent!

Administrative Expenses are \$3,800 under budget, with savings noted across all budget line items for Office Administration. This continues to be good news, and we thank Sarah Clementson for her efficient management of the office, tenant relationships, equipment maintenance, and office inventories.

Social Justice Ministry has spent \$7,200 less than budgeted funds year-to-date, but donated a total of \$6,000 in the month of October. This amount will be reflected in the October financial statements.

Year-to-Date Deficit

We ended September with a deficit of \$4,670. With the addition of a 4th quarter draw from the Legacy Circle Fund and improvements in pledges and congregational giving, we expect to approach our target of a balanced budget by year end. Thank you again for doing what you can to keep your pledges and donations current, and for your faithful commitment to supporting First Pres.

Kathy Merkle-Raymond

OCTOBER WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Date	Early Service	10:30 Service	TOTAL
10/2	8	119	127
10/9	12	84	96
10/16	7	101	108
10/23	7	77	84
10/30	6	75	81
Total for Month of October:			496



Deacons' Diary

Once again the Deacons will be organizing the **Christmas flowers** to decorate the sanctuary. You may give a gift of flowers to honor or remember loved ones. Watch for the Christmas flowers form in the December PRESS and weekly bulletins during Advent.

In January we will be saying good-bye to two hard-working deacons, Trish Hallenbeck (Neighborhood #3) and Pat Kinney (Neighborhood #7), who have served their neighborhoods and the church community so faithfully for many years. Trish keeps our sanctuary looking bright with flowers on each side of the cross, and Pat has been the Hotel de Zink guru and guide.

In February Neighborhoods #3 and #7 will be assigned to new deacons.

Mary Alice Thornton

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

WORSHIP AND MUSIC MINISTRY: Thanks To Do Martin!

Many church members are unaware of the volunteer work that our pastor's wife, Do Martin, does month in and month out for our worship services. It is Do who decorates the communion table each week, including changing colors to match the liturgical season. It is also Do who has made the banners currently hanging in the sanctuary and soon-to-be new ones for the Advent Season.

The worship and music ministry committee is grateful for the creative contribution that Do provides for our worship environment and wanted the congregation to know of her consistent volunteer work on our behalf. Thanks,

Updates...

Do! We missed your talent while you and Rob were on sabbatical. Welcome back!

Dave Thornton

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY: October Activities

The Social Justice Ministry reports the following work of the Spirit from our October 2nd ministry meeting:

Two representatives from Ecumenical Hunger Program (Lesia Preston, Lea Martinez) visited and reported that they are low on funds to help those in need. Among other services, they currently offer a child and family therapist from Children Health Awareness Council, and someone from Stanford Pediatrics' parent clinic for health and nutrition help, and they assist in getting kids job-ready for possible entry to the job market. They reported a large increase in needs this year for food boxes, for Pampers, and for hygiene help. EHP serves up to 700 clients per month, with 1200 families during the holidays. They reported their main needs now as funds for the therapist, for Christmas, and for the holiday program. (Our donation to them would be in addition to our work on Christmas for Others.) They can also use washer/dryer and furniture, and they have a truck to pick goods up. After Lesia and Lea left, we discussed an amount that we in Social Justice Ministry want to approve for donation to them. We are proposing that we donate \$4,000.

Paul George of Peninsula Peace and Justice Center also visited us on October 2nd to share details of that program. Their website is very active, with a million visits per year; PPJC specializes in education about social justice issues, including an events calendar, action alerts, and grassroots work like petitions, phone calls to public figures, and occasional marches and vigils. PPJC would love to put on events at Fellowship Hall. Our SJM chair, Vicky Greenbaum, explained the new rental process, including the potential co-sponsorship of certain events by SJM. PPJC would need to be responsible in using the kitchen, restoring the sanctuary, and so on. After some discussion of logistics for these rentals, we proposed that we would provide PPJC a point person to smooth the way for their events at First Pres. Minako Sano volunteered for that. After Paul left, we agreed that SJM would like to propose a donation of \$2,000 to PPJC.

In other business, we agreed to donate \$350 for the Israel/Palestine conference (requested by Linda Busek), and we began to discuss potential recipients of the remaining money in our SJM budget.

Ellen Perry

FILM GROUP: "The Lemon Tree" (2009)



This allegory is as bitter as the fruit in the title song – yet somehow offers sweet moments of triumph and self-assurance that help the two main characters evolve.

They are Salma, the widowed owner of a lemon orchard, and Mira, the lonely wife of the Defense Minister whose family moves next to Salma's grove. Over the course of the film each stands on her own feet, rising as David against Goliath.

How that happens is the undercurrent of the plot, where the Israeli Secret Service would remove the grove to prevent a "terrorist" attack and erects a fence around it.

Salma's existence as a lemon-grower is threatened; she sues and takes her case to the Israeli Supreme Court. On the way she finds a legal partner and empathy from her lawyer Ziad, who may have ulterior motives but captures her heart for a while.

Salma gets no support from Palestinian male elders, who chide her for dishonoring her dead husband by accompanying this young lawyer. Her scarf plays an interesting role, as the film group noted, because Salma would keep it on, then off, throughout the movie, perhaps signaling her confusion toward the men in her life.

Mira, on the other hand, discovers she is alone, ignored by her husband and kept by the Secret Service from exploring her surroundings, including Salma. Neither woman is trusted by the Secret Service – or given any freedom. Both, ironically, steal into the caged lemon grove -- as acts of rebellion?

Updates...

The tension in the film is real, the disregard felt toward the women by both Israeli and Palestinian men was sadly real, but the strength of each woman towers in the end.

Acting note: Salma was played with solemn beauty by Hiam Abbass, and Rona Lipaz-Michael deftly conveyed Mira's restless loneliness.

106 min. No MPAA rating.

Greg Plant

And Finally...

FROM MARY DECKER, "The Piano in the Sanctuary"

Throughout my childhood years in San Diego, my family visited Fafa's and Nana's house - that is, my grandparents' house -- every Sunday after church. We ate barbequed hamburgers. We swam in the swimming pool. And then, later in the afternoon, my three siblings and I took turns performing on the big, black piano.

These piano performances were routine for us. The adults, children, and occasional guests gathered in the big family room and found places to sit. (Fafa always sat in his big, heavy rocking chair.) Then my three siblings and I played our pieces while the audience listened attentively. The adults clapped enthusiastically. My siblings and I smiled obediently, knowing we had fulfilled our obligation. Then we waited for the adults to get distracted so we could go climb trees or pick peaches.

So, where did this big, black Grotrian-Steinweg piano come from? Martin Shepherd, a well-known piano technician in the Bay Area, told me that the piano was built in Germany in 1912. Since that time almost 100 years ago, this wonderful piano has had a long journey around the world.

In 2008, I asked my gravely-ill father about the history of the piano. I figured that he was the only person left on earth who knew details about this piano's life; and I needed to get the information from him quickly because he had pancreatic cancer. I could only remember two stories I heard when I was a child: Right after World War II, my grandparents (my father's parents) lived in a big mansion in Yokosuka, Japan, for four years, and the piano was part of the decor in their living room; and in 1950, they shipped the piano from Japan to San Diego.

I asked my dad, "What was a German piano doing in Japan?"

Pops said, "Well, the piano started out in China. And then the Japanese stole it from the Chinese."

I said, "So, why was a German piano in CHINA?"

"I dunno." Then he speculated, "Maybe the Chinese stole it from the Germans."

"How did Fafa get the piano?"

"Right after the war, someone in the U.S. Navy stole it from the Japanese and put it in the B.O.Q. [Bachelor Officers' Quarters]; and then, after a while, Fafa gave the order that the piano was to be moved to his house. He paid for all the other souvenirs he got from Japan, but not this one."



My grandfather was Admiral Benton W. Decker. He was in charge of the reconstruction of Yokosuka after World War II, and he spent four long years helping the Japanese people rebuild their city. I have been told by numerous people from Japan that he was something really special to the Japanese people because he was so effective and treated them with such respect - especially the women. I hope this was true.

There is a bronze statue of my grandfather on the hill overlooking Tokyo Bay. The plaque says the statue was erected by the citizens of Yokosuka as a "token gratitude and esteem." So, I fig-

And Finally...

ure that Fafa must have treated the people of Yokosuka well, even if he did take the Grotrian-Steinweg piano under odd circumstances.

When my grandmother, Nana, died in 1998, there was a lot of estrangement and drama in our family, and the piano became yet one more controversy. For decades, I was told that the piano would go to me when my grandparents died. But when my grandmother's will was opened, my siblings and I were amazed to find out that the piano had been bequeathed to my sister. My sister sighed and quickly made things right by passing the piano to me. But, then, the problem was that I had no place to put an 8-foot piano. So, in 1999 I decided to ask Martin Shepherd to rebuild the entire piano (including hammers, strings, pins) so I could give a long-term loan to First Pres Church.



This big, black piano has taken a long, interesting road over the last 100 years. Germany, China, Japan, San Diego, Palo Alto... We don't know the whole story, but I love the fact that this stolen war booty has found a safe, sane home in the First Pres sanctuary.

Next Presbytery Meeting:

Saturday, November 19th, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Westminster Church
1100 Shasta Avenue, San Jose, CA 95126

The following draft policies were presented to the Presbytery of San Jose at its stated meeting on September 24, 2011, for a first reading, and will be voted on at the next stated meeting, November 19, 2011.

[The Presbytery of San Jose Policy Regarding Dismissing Congregations](#)
[Plan for redressing the imbalance between Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders commissioners to Presbytery](#)

Responses should be communicated electronically to the Acting Stated Clerk, John Kelso, at JohnEKelso@gmail.com.

Mandated Reporter and Abuse Misconduct Prevention Training

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

Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.—Lunch Provided

1. November 5th at Mayflower Presbyterian Church, 14th and Central, Pacific Grove
2. January 21st at First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto, 1140 Cowper St., Palo Alto



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

Wed Nov 9, 2011

2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 2, Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Volunteer team that cooks, serves and cleans up after dinner for our local folks in need, 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: Rajesh Philipos. Dinner at 5pm.

Sat Nov 12, 2011

8:30am - 12pm Council Retreat, Off-site Planning Meeting and Training

Sun Nov 13, 2011

8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel

Worship service of reflection and sharing

9:15am - 10:15am Adult Study, Fellowship Hall and Lounge

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 will be celebrated. Please bring food for the Palo Alto food closet.

11:30am - 1pm Stewardship Luncheon, Fellowship Hall

Please plan to come to the Annual Stewardship Luncheon immediately following Community Worship

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

Wed Nov 16, 2011

2pm - 6:30pm UMPA meal-Team 3, Etz Chayim, Fellowship Hall

Coordinator: David. Dinner at 5pm.

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

Monthly meeting of Church Council, the operational leadership board

for our church congregation

Thu Nov 17, 2011

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 Nov 20, 2011

8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel

9:15am - 10:15am Adult Study, Fellowship Hall and Lounge

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 Nov 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@fprespa.org)

Thu Nov 24, 2011

Happy Thanksgiving!

Sun Nov 27, 2011 - First Sunday in Advent

8:30am - 9:30am Early Church, Chapel

9:15am - 10:15am Adult Study, Fellowship Hall and Lounge

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 Nov 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.