



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk
November, 2017



Not too long ago someone was coming out of worship, and after shaking my hand asked me, “What was the meaning of that sermon today?” I tried to answer with some profound example of insight, but didn’t improve on the person’s confusion and they left by saying, “I just don’t get it.”

When I was being taught to preach in seminary, I got the impression that my job as a preacher was to close the gaps. By that I mean I stand in the pulpit and look out upon great, wide gaps. Gaps between me and you, gaps between our time and the time of the Bible, gaps between us and God. As a preacher I believe it was my job, within about twenty minutes, to close those gaps, to build an interpretive bridge between me and you and between you and the Bible, and so forth. I see myself as a bridge builder, or the mender of the gaps. The worst criticism I could imagine came when that person left the church muttering, “Sorry, but I just don’t get it.” It was my job as a preacher to close the gaps in understanding, to move the listener to exclaim, “I got it!”

But after many years of preaching, I’ve begun to wonder if this is an unfair understanding of the preaching task. What if my great task as a preacher is not to bridge the gaps but to open them up? Maybe it is in the gaps that we are given room to roam, space, and air to breathe. Sometimes it almost seems as if Jesus, as a communicator, does not want too quickly, too easily to bridge the gap between his listeners and the gospel. In fact, in his parables particularly, he seems intent on exposing his listeners to the gulf between their understandings of God and the reality of God. What is at the root of Jesus’ reluctance to easily or quickly reveal who he is? Could it be that Jesus wants us to gain an awareness of the gap between us and God?

Now when you think about it, when Jesus taught, he taught in parables. The fact that Jesus’ primary, and certainly most distinctive, mode of communication was parable might be a significant indication of Jesus’ teaching style. Jesus did not talk primarily in allegory, did not preach three point sermons, did not offer little moralistic messages that reassured people in their present knowledge. He told parables.

In most any parable, there is a reversal of expectation, a dislocation of the hearer. Right there, at the point where conventional expectations are reversed, where the listener is dislodged, dislocated, there is the evangelical moment. And it has taken me this long to understand that it is in this gap, God has room to move upon us and upon our present constructions of reality. In some sense, every sermon, whether it takes as its text a parable or not, ought to be parabolic, ought to provoke a confession of ignorance before the mystery of God, ought to at some point move the listener to mumble, “I just don’t get it.” So thank you for your honesty. Thank you for your support. Thank you for listening to my “one more story” and seeking God’s divine intervention on your heart in spite of me. Because sometimes, I just don’t get it either.

Humbly,
Dennis

CHILDREN'S ED NEWS



Thanks to everyone who joined us for Fall Frolic. We had so much fun! A big shout out to Dave for always being the best host we could ask for.

T-SHIRTS FOR SALE

Children's Ed will be selling FPCSLO t-shirts in two different styles on November 5 & 12. Watch for us in the Courtyard

to place your order. You can also contact Jen and she'll take your order. The shirts will be available for pick up the beginning of December.

WEDNESDAYS AT THE ROCK

Every Wednesday at 4:30, or whenever you can join us. All kids kindergarten through 6th grade are welcome. The fall session will continue until December 13th. Winter session will start January 10th. Music, lessons, food, games and fellowship.

SAVE THE DATES

All Church Movie Night

In the church parking lot | November 3 | 6:00 pm
We will have hotdogs, s'mores, popcorn and movie treats. We will be watching "The Goonies". Bring

a beach chair and a blanket if you would like- everything else will be provided. This event is for everyone. Join us and bring a friend or two.

Advent Night

Wilson Hall | December 3 | 5:00 pm

Join us as we start the Advent Season with crafts, food, carols and fellowship. This event is for everyone and a perfect time to invite family, friends and neighbors.

Children's Musical and Bake Sale

December 10 | 10:00 am

Come and share in this fun tradition. The children will present their musical at 10:00 and the Bake Sale will start as soon as it's over. Funds from the Bake Sale go directly to our kids. If you would like to donate items for the bake sale please bring them that morning or to the Church Office during the week before. Cookies, cakes, breads, candy, jam/jelly etc... are all welcome.

Children's Ed would like to thank you for your continued support.

Your Children's Ed Committee

Jen Rabenaldt, MaryEl Hansen, Teri Cueto, Diane Shervem, Becky Falasco, Bonnie Kraemer and Becky Moseley

ADULT EDUCATION

"The Bible in Translation: From Hebrew & Greek into Languages People Speak"

10-week Adult Education Series continues with instructor Kate Murray.

In September, we introduced the topic of Bible translation and looked at the earliest translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, before the Christian era. Through October, we surveyed the proliferation of translations in the early Christian era, a phenomenon anticipated by the Pentecost event of Acts 2. The Gospel quickly spread eastward and westward, resulting in numerous early translations in diverse

cultures and languages. Most notable is the Latin Vulgate, a standard for over 1000 years. We crossed the English Channel to investigate the earliest "Englising" of the Bible, before English was English.

In November, we'll narrow our focus to English translations. The earliest English translators faced persecution and even death for their efforts (Class 7, November 5). Eventually, English Bible versions were imperially sponsored, leading to the King James Authorized Version of 1611 (Class 8, November 12). The ever-popular KJV was updated through the 20th century (Class 9, November 19). Finally, we'll survey the abundance of modern translations and discuss how to choose the right one for you (Class 10, November 26).

Questions? Contact Kate at katym2@gmail.com.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

BIBLE STUDY

The study of Hebrews challenges us to dig a little more into what the Word means to us. Lesson 2 in November is "In Community with the Living God." What attribute or quality of God's character is most important to you and your community? In this lesson the Living God is active and calling people to light instead of darkness, glory in place of gloom, and to party instead of issuing a warning to stay away. You are invited to participate in the life of God. Now in the trials and trouble of this world we live in doesn't that sound like a great plan? Let's talk... join us in one of our study groups to form a community to do just that. After all, God lives in and among us and we are here now to do God's work.

CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY!

Lesson 3 will be special because all study groups and interested women will come together to continue to look at community with the Living Word with a joyful Christmas program, lunch, and recognition of a special woman selected for the Honorary Life Member Award. Mark your calendar for December 7 at 9:30 am.

The holiday season is always a good time to show others what the Living God can do through you! Be

LIBRARY REVIEW

The book *The River of God* by Gregory Riley is a book that was donated to the church library by L. Paglialonga.

Author Gregory Riley embarks on a remarkable journey in this readable and persuasive account of the origins of Christianity. Riley demonstrates that early Christians held widely differing beliefs about God, Jesus, the Devil, and the human soul, and follows these beliefs back to their sources in Greek science and philosophy, Judaism, and the religions of the ancient Middle East. An expert on the context in which Christianity arose, Riley maps out a new understanding of the forging of Christianity, and conveys a vital message for today about the true

an advocate for God and come to the December gathering with gifts of love for our Navajo community in Kayenta, Arizona. Our mission for December is to collect school supplies and small gifts for children through seniors. More information to come later.

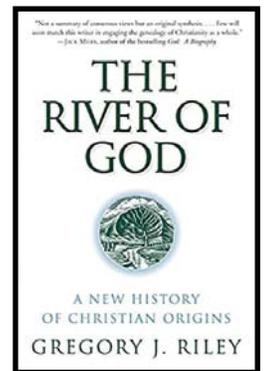
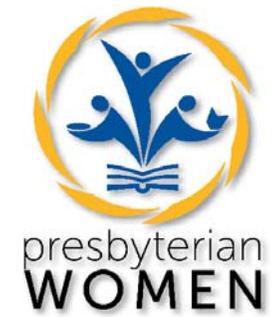
2017 PW THANK OFFERING

Please join us in being thankful this Thanksgiving month. The PW 2017 Thank Offering will be taken this month "For The Healing of The Nations." "On either side of the river is the tree of life...and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22: 2b). People all over the world are anxious and unsure of the future. We can help with funding human needs that provide for safe environments, healthy living facilities, clean water, educational opportunities, health concerns, and many other projects that help relieve people's anxiety. These gifts will be healing leaves that we read about in Revelations.

Grants have been given by the Presbyterian Women's Creative Ministries for national and international projects since 1888. Let us carry on in supporting worldwide ministries. -Dorothy Truesdale, Moderator

nature of Christian faith as inherently diverse. (Review by Amazon)

"Riley's book shows how many cultural streams- Egyptian, Greek, Jewish, Roman, Near Eastern - converged and contributed to the power and complexity of Christianity." (Elaine Pagels, Princeton University)



MUSIC NEWS

REFORMED THEOLOGY IN WORSHIP OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

U.S.A.

Every fall, as we prepare for our two services at FPCSLO, the question comes up as to 'why' we do certain components of our worship Service. Specifically, the Prayer of Confession, Affirmation of Faith, need for two scripture texts (Old and New Testaments) etc., and this led me to use this subject matter for my newsletter articles (since music is a driving force within the Worship Service) and I attend the Worship committee meetings. As I have delved into the Book of Order, Book of Common Worship, and articles on Reformed Theology, I realize I have taken on more than can be fully explained in a couple newsletter articles, and that this is more appropriate a subject for our Christian Education Department to consider for future classes to educate our congregation. So over the next three months my goal is to give you an overview (1) of meaning and formation of our worship, (2) of the meaning of individual components used, and (3) how does this look for FPCSLO in today's culture.

Reformed churches in the sixteenth century used service books. And from these came the forms for worship. As Puritans and Scots struggled to find liberty from the English political and religious pressures within this liturgy, it resulted in bitter conflict and guess where it all happened.... you got it, it was in worship that the conflict raged. The result of this conflict eventually led to the Westminster Directory for the Publique Worship of God in 1644. It was the dominant role in shaping the worship of American Presbyterians. Many revisions have taken place since then; 1788, 1894, 1906, 1932, 1946, 1970, and finally in 1993 the Book of Common Worship that we use today was adopted by the General Assembly. I have taken a few excerpts from its content to give a general view of how we approach worship today.

An important characteristic of worship in the Reformed tradition is that it centers on God rather than ourselves and our feelings. Our attention is drawn to the majesty and glory of the triune God, who created all things and by whose power all things are sustained, who was revealed in Jesus Christ raised from the dead to rule over all things, and who is at work as the giver of life in and among us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Book of Common Worship, true to its title, embodies "common" prayer. While hundreds of contemporary prayers are included, prayers are also drawn from the ancient church and from across the centuries of Christian worship. Prayers

and forms shared in common with the church from other times and places give a sense of our unity with the people of God throughout time. This book is faithful to the long tradition of Christian worship because the foundation of its orders is worship that centers on Word and Sacrament.

In the Sixteenth Century, congregational participation was encouraged with the provision of responses and unison prayers. Prayers shared in common may be compared with the vast collection of hymns (praise, psalms and spirituals) we share in common. In reality hymns are sung prayers. Just as hymns through familiarity are cherished and are a source of strength in daily life, so prayers in the liturgical treasury become familiar and greatly loved through repeated use. Set within our minds and hearts, they provide a rich reservoir of devotion available when needed in the varying circumstances of life.

It is essential that worship express the burdens and concerns of the time and place in which we live. When both the local and the universal are thus held together, it becomes clear, in the ordering of prayer and in the prayers we pray, that the congregation in this place is a living expression of the church universal.

Care has been taken to be inclusive in language. It was a goal in the preparation of this book that the language of the prayers be eloquent and rhythmic, contemporary in language and comprehended with ease, believing that well crafted prayers engage the ear and are remembered by the worshiper. The book also recognizes that language involves more than what we hear. The language of the visual and the tactile are also included in suggestions for actions that engage the whole person in the worship of God.

With this overview in mind, next month we will explore the components of worship that fall under four basic categories that together create our Worship Service: Gathering, The Word, The Eucharist and the Sending.

As you prepare for worship consider what you might want to contribute; being a lay reader that helps the congregation in the liturgy and prayers of the day, ushering to help greet those coming in and giving of their offerings, or participating in one of the music groups that lead the hymns, psalms and spirituals to take the worship experience to another level. See information below to start your participation:

Praise Team: Sundays at 8:15 pm

Praise Singers: Sundays at 6:15 pm

Children's Choir: Wednesdays at 4:30 pm

Beginning Handbells: Wednesdays at 5:30 pm

Advanced Handbells: Wednesdays at 6:15 pm

Chancel Choir: Wednesdays at 7:20 pm

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

UPCOMING EVENTS

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY, ESPECIALLY:

For the Rev. Dennis Falasco as he pastors our congregation,

For our elders and deacons as they lead and guide us,

For Jen Rabenaldt and our Children's Ministry,

For all those involved in our Youth Ministry, especially

leaders Ryan Joslin, Sarah Dirk, and Jake Wolfe,

For Joel Drenckpohl and the Front Porch Campus Ministry,

For those who are undergoing treatments for various health issues,

For our church's elderly, especially those confined to their homes or care centers, like Cathy Anderson, Charles Blair, Gladys Brannum, George Daniel, Jean Honeyman, Jeanne Hoyt, Lorna Hudson, Stella & Starr Jenkins, Marie Kammenzind, Hulda Nickel,

Joy Reed, Idabelle Shields, Dottie Jean & John Stechman, Ernest Triebel, Carol West, and Richard & Lou Wiens,

For the women and men who do so much to support the countless ministries, missions, and activities of our church,

For the local and global missions our church supports,

For members and friends serving in the military:

Drew Descary (stationed at Camp Pendleton)

Laura Kraemer (attending Navy Medical School in MD)

Jim Shelton (deployed on an aircraft carrier)

Michael Poe (stationed in Florida)

Joseph Sall (son of Anne Ramirez; stationed in Carlisle, PA)

Travis Hatakeyama (grandson of the Luensers; stationed in Germany)

Brendan Humphrey (grandson of Leila & Bob; on Navy Aircraft Carrier)

And for all of us as we serve God wherever He calls us.

BROWN BAG CONCERT Craig Kincaid and Sonnie Brown will perform pieces on the guitar Friday, November 3 at 12:00 pm in Wilson Hall.

BOOK BROWSERS will meet on Tuesday, November 7 at 7:00 pm in the Library to discuss *The Wandering Gene and the Indian Princess* by Jeff Wheelwright. Our book for December is *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins. Questions? Contact Diane Shervem at 543-1473 or dshervem@charter.net.

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR The Holidays are here and the Alternative Gift Fair will take place on December 3rd from 9:30 am-1:00 pm. Come to Wilson hall and celebrate the gift of Jesus Christ. Buy Fair Trade and Humankind gifts and donate to local, national and international charities. We have 14 charities participating this year.

LIGHT UP A LIFE A ceremonial event to remember loved ones no longer with us. This annual event, hosted by Wilshire Hospice, will take place here at FPCSLO on Thursday, November 2 at 6 pm. To have your loved one's name read and photo included in a special presentation, please email lualwhoc@wilshirehcs.org or call 547-7025 x18. In addition to honoring those who have died, this event will offer community resources that assist in coping with the extra challenges that may arise during the holidays.

INQUIRER'S CLASS

**EVERY SUNDAY FROM
NOVEMBER 12-DECEMBER 3
10:00-10:45 AM IN THE LIBRARY**

This is an opportunity for you to find out about the life and ministry of our church and gives you prayerful consideration to whether you want to become a member of our church. *Participation in the class does not commit you to church membership.*

Contact Bob and Glenda Morgan with any questions at 543-3901.

STEWARDSHIP

ONE THIRD OF THE WAY HOME

We give to First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo because we are grateful. We're grateful for the air we breathe, for the sun that comes out in the morning, and for each day as it unfolds. Yes, we've all experienced setbacks, problems and even heartaches in our lives but God has helped us through those times and we're now even more grateful and want to give thanks.

Although the Stewardship campaign is only one month old, we are 1/3 of the way home.

Here are some comparisons to the previous year:

October 17, 2016		October 16, 2017
80	Pledge cards returned	84
\$14,950	Pledge dollar Increase	\$45,954
\$6,370	Pledge dollar Decrease	\$1,760
\$313,210	Total pledged to date	\$ 290,612
\$8,080	Per Capita @ \$80	\$ 6,900

The proposed budget for this upcoming year is \$764,227. Because our current year's budget was underfunded, Session went out on a limb and approved only an 11 month budget. The 12th month is to be supported by reserves, requiring us to reduce our 10% safety net. The need to replenish these reserves, plus an increase in the amount we would like to have for programs, plus making up for past pledges that we will not receive due to attrition, equals a big need. The biggest need comes from Personnel's budget. It gets the lion's share, \$509,007. They've requested \$50,000 for an assistant pastor to support Pastor Dennis. The job would also entail working with the Youth program and growing our church membership.

Thanks to all of you who have returned your pledge cards so promptly. You've responded generously to the committee's request that you help us meet this 40% budgetary increase. Pledges are even more important than Special Giving. By increasing your pledge as close to 40% as possible it will allow our church's elected leaders to plan what is best for our church overall.

Stewardship Committee

Diane Brocato, Steve Lumm, Tim Smith

ENDOWMENT

What exactly is the FPC Endowment Fund?

Put simply, the Endowment Fund is a "pool" of money received by the church from members in the form of bequests, memorials, trusts, assignments of life insurance, transfers of property (eg: cash, stocks, bonds, and real estate) and other gifts. The total amount (or principal) of these gifts is carefully invested with the Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation. Most years, a predetermined percentage of the Fund's value is withdrawn. The money we pull out is made available for various needs of our church or the operating budget and regular expenses. In for 2016, 3.5% or \$17,240 and for 2017, 4.0% or \$20,153 has been distributed from the ENDOWMENT FUND for the benefit of various Church programs, in accordance with the purposes of the original gifts.

If you'd like to consider a gift of any type, please talk with a member of our church's Endowment Committee: John Eichler, Jerry Kaml, Jane Maxwell, Diane Shervem, Bert Townsend, Dorothy Trusedale, Roger Verity, & Virginia Walter.

Even a modest gift will make a difference.

THANK YOU

Thank you dear church family. Never have I had such a strong loving support in a time of need. Your prayers calls, emails, and cards were overwhelming. My heartfelt appreciation goes to all my loving church family members. Your prayers were powerful and meaningful and are being felt daily.

Love in Christ, Dorothy Truesdale

MISSIONS

FPCSLO has had a long local mission activity of providing meals for the People's Kitchen through Prado Day Center. Once a month we prepare and serve a hot lunch to 45-75 people. There is a need to develop several new coordinators for this activity which involves buying supplies, preparing the food, and organizing a small group to serve it on the second Wednesday of every month. The time involved is approximately 5-6 hours per month. If you enjoy cooking for groups and serving very appreciative recipients please consider this mission. Contact Ben Parker (current coordinator) or Steve Walker (Missions Elder) for more information.

FRONT PORCH

The seams are bursting at Front Porch as new and returning students find their way into the coffee shop to reconnect with staff and friends, to shift gears into study mode and, of course, to have a cup of coffee or tea. Wednesdays still offer a home-cooked meal, and the year started off with a tri-tip sandwich dinner enjoyed by about 500 students. The numbers have lessened a bit at the weekly meal, but ask Evelyn Ruehr or Valerie Evans how many they served mid-October!

A change this year is that Dom Groll has taken on a new position as Assistant Director, a year round position, in which she will take over more of the administrative functions at Porch so that Joel's time is freed up for more ministerial functions. Dom has organized a new volunteer program, and students are flocking to volunteer at the coffee shop. These volunteers make sure there are adequate supplies of coffee, milk, and cups so that the coffee shop runs smoothly and that bathrooms stay stocked and clean. It is quite an operation to serve over 400 students a day!

The school year started with a time of sadness as Kennedy Love, a vibrant part of the Front Porch community, was killed in a bicycle accident just before the start of school. Students came to Front Porch to grieve and support each other. Joel was involved in numerous memorial services for Kennedy, including

traveling to San Diego to lead a service for his family there. Kennedy's smile and energy will be missed, but not forgotten.

Front Porch is always open for visits and support. Please contact any of the Council members at our church: Mary Blythe, Tad Miller, Valerie Evans, or Susan Updegrove

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

To the following seniors (over 85) who have birthdays in November:

Lou Pippin: November 10

Lou Shevlin: November 14

Jeanne Hoyt: November 16

To everyone else who has an November birthday! If we have overlooked anyone, please contact the Church Office at 543-5451.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Can we offer friendship and encouragement to our members who are going through changes in their lives? Yes, we can! Training sessions for volunteers in a program called Stephen Ministry are being offered on Mondays from 9-11:30 am in the Church Library. We are asking for a caring team of people to receive the training and to be willing to visit one or two persons regularly as friends. Many of life's issues can be managed when we know we are not alone in them. The training and the follow-through support of SM leaders will give support to make a difference in the lives of folks.

Interested? Please, join in the training. The first training session was last Monday, but Mark Hall, the SM trainer from St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, will provide a make-up session or two so we all can move forward together. *Questions?* Contact Jim Seeber, 535-5613, and plan to attend Monday sessions.



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

San Luis Obispo

PO Box 591
981 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA
93406
tel: 805.543.5451
email: churchoffice@fpcslo.org
web: fpcslo.org

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

FIRST SERVICE: 8:45 am

EDUCATION HOUR: 10 am

SECOND SERVICE: 11 am

Skilled Childcare Available