



FROM GOOD TO GREAT

Over these last few years your Session has had about four “retreats” to talk about future direction. This last retreat we dealt with a “5 year goal play” and what it would cost and what we want to prioritize and the cost. This will then be discussed as a Session and shared with you when it gets finalized. I shared this direction planning with a good minister friend of mind and he strongly encouraged me to read Jim Collins’s book Built to Last, which talked about how great companies built long-term success into their corporate fabric. I found it to be an insightful book for churches if they desire to endure in the same cultural setting as business.

After the management researcher and Stanford scholar published Built to Last, a friend and CEO of a small company told him that it was a useless book. “You studied companies that were great

from the beginning.” explained the CEO. “But what about companies that wake up partway through life and realize that they’re good, but not great?”

So Collins began his five-year quest to find corporations that not only fit his friend's description, but had also discovered ways to become great companies. The main question he tried to answer was, “How can an organization change from being okay to outstanding?”

Collins reviewed thousands of companies, looking for those that made the leap from good to great. He found eleven corporations that fit his parameters for greatness and focused the remainder of the study on what made them change.

For churches, according to Collins’s model, studying mega churches like Willow Creek and Saddleback may not provide answers, because those churches developed greatness from the beginning. Rather, Collins’s study would be similar to examining churches that had been average for years, but then experienced a dramatic and enduring leap.

According to Collins, the main reason there are so few great organizations is that “the good ones settle for good... the primary enemy of great is not bad... it’s good.” So Collins wrote another book titled Good to Great.

What caught my interest was in the second chapter, in which Collins describes his research team’s discoveries about leadership. Every one of his great organizations was led by a devoted, competent leader who combines personal humility with professional will. Collins calls this person a “level 5 leader.” Level 5 leaders are not the stereotypical, charismatic drivers who set vision and chart the course. Rather, “they first got the right people on the bus and then figured out where to drive it.” Getting the right people on the team proved more important than planning the right strategy. Collins also discovered that great organizations are distinguished by four traits:

- Confronting the brutal facts while maintaining faith and hope.
- A culture of disciplined thought and action.
- Using technology to accelerate growth, but not as the primary means of igniting transformation.
- Doing the proper things over and over to build momentum.

And finally, Collins found that “good-to-great organizations” developed a combination of finding what they’re the best at, what their passion is, and what drives their economy – a confluence he calls the “Hedgehog Concept.”

Some of my friends who pastor churches and who have read Good to Great have been challenged by Collins’s suggestion that we avoid leading by charisma. Others were prompted to create a “Hedgehog Concept” of their own... still others questioned what role the Holy Spirit and spiritual revival have in igniting new life within their church.

PASTOR'S NOTE, CONTINUED:

Good to Great is a business book, make no mistake, but chapters one and two alone are worth taking a “devotional time” to read what these great businesses have to teach churches that would be good....maybe even great in our mission and ministry.

I believe our decision to elect our next slate of officers will determine the direction this church will go over the next few years. Will we be good, or will we be great? Pray for your Nominating Committee as it considers names you pass along to them. Also consider praying for our current officers as they will start the process which we pray will be determined by God's greatness through their leading. “I have great plans for you, says the Lord.”

COMING UP

BROWN BAG CONCERT

Don't miss The Royal Garden Swing Orchestra on Friday, September 7 at 12 pm. The Royal Garden Swing Orchestra is made up of 10 professional musicians from the San Luis Obispo County area and is celebrating its 29th year performing the swinging sounds of the swing era. With a musicality rarely heard today, this ten-piece band recreates the excitement and energy from the Big Band era. Over 200 special arrangements make up the library of memorable tunes from the swing era to modern classics.

SLO BOAT EVENTS

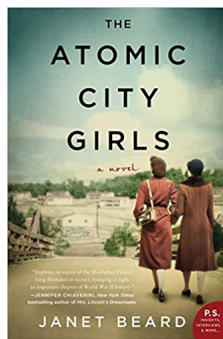
Save the date for Friday, September 7, 5:30 pm in Wilson Hall for a potluck dinner and a great program featuring The Bald Spots. The Bald Spots, which started in 1993 at a Vocal Arts Ensemble Pops Concert, has become one of San Luis Obispo's favorite performing groups. Singing many of the doo wop songs made popular in the 50's and 60's and mixing humor and gyrating antics, The Bald Spots include our own Dale Wolff, Mike Suddarth, and Craig Updegrove. Plan to sit up front or near some open space because you very well may want to dance and sing along!

SLO Boats activity for October! Saturday, October 6 Symphony Rehearsal 11:00 am-1:00 pm at the PAC. Watch for details coming soon!

JAZZ VESPERS

Save the date for October 7 at 4 pm and the Marshall Otwell Quartet. Marshall was the pianist and musical director for Carmen McRae for more than eight years, performing all over the world and recording numerous albums with her, one of which, “Live at the Great American Music Hall” featuring Dizzy Gillespie, was nominated for a Grammy.

BOOK BROWERS



Book Browsers meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 in the library. On September 4 we will be discussing The Atomic City Girls by Janet Beard.

On October 2 our book will be The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane by Lisa See. November's book is The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce, December is The Women in the Castle by Jessica Shattuck, January is Same Kind of Different as Me by Ron Hall and Denver Moore, February is Little Fires Everywhere by Celeste Ng, March is Killers of the Flower Moon, April is Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate, and for May we will discuss Behold the Dreamers by Imbolo Mbue.

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Shervem at 805-543-1473 or dshervem@charter.net.

DEACONS

During the difficult past months of many memorial services, our congregation has come together and worked with the Deacons to provide meals, visits, and help with memorial receptions, sharing the love of God and of our church family. We thank you so much.

As a church, we will continue to support our bereaved friends as well as those temporarily sidelined due to surgery or other setbacks. An important part of this is the Food Angel ministry. Mike Suddarth coordinates this program to provide meals as needed. We would like to update and expand the list of volunteer cooks! It works this way: when Mike is made aware of a need for meals, he sends out an email to all who have expressed interest in helping. Meals can be divided up (for example: salad, main dish, dessert) so you needn't worry about providing an entire meal if the group is large, or you love making salads, but main dishes throw you!

If you would like to join in this supportive ministry and be added to the list, please contact Mike at fmsuddarth@charter.net or 805-540-4312

-Margo Smith, moderator

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women had the introduction to a challenging Bible study on September 6, based on “God’s Promise - I Am With With You.” We will now progress onward with Lesson One. God is with us wherever we are. This allows us to consider the surprise and powerful intimacy of God’s willingness to be with us in all circumstances. Genesis 26: 10-22 begins with God’s promises to Abraham. Join us to pursue this important message. This study also walks us through several verses in Psalms and some of the women of the Bible. Groups that meet are published in the church bulletin. Watch for them or contact Dorothy at 805-541-6779.

Are you aware that your faith and creativity can serve God’s purpose in our church? The entire May/June issue of “Horizons”, the magazine for Presbyterian Women, has multiple stories on ways to use your talents. Skills at teaching, as an artist, in cooking, drama, storytelling, visual arts, music, in mission, leadership, justice and peace, are just a few talents people have. Consider where those skills and talents that you possess can be expressed in service here at FPCSLO and for Presbyterian Women’s support.

On a sad note, many of you might remember Blaine and Marilee Parkin. A notice in the Tribune listed the death of Marilee a few weeks ago. Marilee was very active in Presbyterian Women here at FPC. She was instrumental in providing monthly services to the clients at Mission View Care Center in conjunction with the Church Women United. We are still active in that service. Every month a local church provides cookies and helps with the sing-a-long for the clients. We are assigned two opportunities each year. Marilee’s service to PW was over several years and was prior to their decision to attend the Morro Bay Presbyterian Church which was closer to their home at that time.

-Dorothy Truesdale, Moderator

STEPHEN MINISTRY

“God never intended us to get through (difficult) life experiences alone.” Thus begins a flyer about Stephen Ministry. Our church has participated in this very special program of personal care off and on for the past decade. A trained companion who can help us deal with cancer, hospitalizations, loss of a loved one, job loss, divorce and other challenges is one way we can share the love of God for us at every moment.

Stephen Ministers are folks who have invested 50 hours of careful and quality education to be able to give thoughtful care and support to others facing a “rough patch” in life. Most situations lead to a renewed appreciation of life and deepening faith. Some are helped along by referral to a professional person in medicine or counseling and nearly all are benefited by the counseling given. Last year three new Stephen Minister men were trained over 5 months and now are able to help other men facing difficult times. Since men only visit men and women only visit women in Stephen Ministry, First Pres. hopes for some women to sign on for SM training this fall.

We are blest in having the training experience and skills of a retired military chaplain and Episcopal pastor to lead the class. Rev. Mark Hall will help present quality sessions in an efficient way and with a great sense of humor. What the classes provide are ideas for living that apply in our personal lives as well as in our ministries.

We are working between several congregations to provide this caring ministry in our community. If you would like to join in a deeply satisfying ministry of care for persons around you, please speak with Jim Seeber (535-5613) and/or request some information and an application form in the church office. Complete the application and an interview with Dr. Seeber and you will be ready to join our SM team in a series of 2 hour classes this fall. Remember, we can do the caring – God does the curing of hearts and souls.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! CHILDREN'S ED

To the following seniors (over 85) who have birthdays in July and August:

Richard Andrews – September 11

Glenn Carlson – September 21

Cathy Anderson – September 25

Bob Williams – September 26

Lou Fogo – September 29

To everyone else with a September birthday!

If we have overlooked anyone, please contact the Church Office at 543-5451.

FRONT PORCH

There is a great article about Front Porch in the August/September issue of Presbyterians Today. Titled “Students envision a healthier community,” the article describes Front Porch’s reaction to the racially insensitive incidents at Cal Poly last year. “We [Front Porch] became a place for students to process and grieve,” said Front Porch ministries director Joel Drenckpohl. The article also stated that as conversations about race deepened, the students began to grasp that they wouldn’t truly be able to listen and to celebrate each other, or their differences, until they recognized each other’s humanity.

Also mentioned in the article is the transition of Front Porch as a ministry center primarily targeting Christians to one open to all students who want a place to be themselves and where relationships are the goal. Today, Front Porch is frequented by Christians, Jews, atheists, and Muslims all wanting to be part of the life-giving experience it provides.

A copy of this article will be posted on the church bulletin board for those interested in reading it in depth.

-Susan Updegrave, Front Porch Council Member

INQUIRER'S CLASS

The next Inquirer's Class will be held during the Education Hour September 9, 16, 23, and 30. Are you interested in becoming a member of this church? This class provides all the information you need to know. Please contact Pam Rodewald for more info (805-215-2396).

Wow, have we had a great summer! We were able to do three weeks of VBS and it was amazing. The kids, leaders and volunteers all had a blast. Thank you for all of your support! Dates are already on the calendar for next summer. Watch for more “camp” opportunities coming up.

WEDNESDAYS AT THE ROCK

Resumes September 5 • 4:30 to 7:00

Music, Bible lessons, crafts, dinner, games, and special guests

All kids are welcome and nursery care is available.

We are really excited to start back up. We could use some volunteers. Please let Jen know if you can help out. Even just one Wednesday would be appreciated.

FALL FROLIC

October 21 • 2:00 pm • At the home of Dave Bauer

Please join us for this fun event! Everyone is welcome.

Food, fun, fellowship, and of course frolic.

ADVENT NIGHT

December 2 • 5:00 pm • Wilson Hall

Join us as we prepare for the birth of Christ.

Everyone is welcome.

Crafts, fellowship, caroling and snacks.

CHILDREN'S MUSICAL AND BAKE SALE

December 9 • 10:00 am • Wilson Hall

You will not want to miss this special tradition at First Pres. Especially this year - it will be full of surprises.

If you can bring something for Children's Ed to sell at the Bake Sale that would be fantastic. Cookies, cake, jam, peanut brittle, scones, etc....

Thank you for all your support of Children's Ed!

Teri Cueto, MaryEl Hansen, Bonnie Kraemer, Diane Shervem, Anne Walling and Jen Rabenaldt

Jen's contact info: jen@fpcslo.org

805-543-5451 ext. 205

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

ENDOWMENT

CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

Include the church in your will!

Please pray for our church family, especially:

For the Rev. Dennis Falasco as he guides our congregation,
For our elders and deacons as they lead us,

For Jen Rabenaldt and Karlyn Tremaine, Stephanie Vigil,
Grace Power Smith, Ashley Carder & Ian Rabenaldt, who
help with our Children's Ministry,

For all those involved in our Youth Ministry, especially
leaders Sarah Dirk, Jake Wolfe, Brecken DeOilers, Hailey
Firstman and Kelsie Krueger,

For Joel Drenckpohl and the Front Porch Ministry,

For those who are undergoing treatments for various health
issues,

For the spouses, family, and friends of the following people
from our church family who passed away in July and
August: Richard Dickey, Chris Poe, Bud Beecher, Judy
Nielsen, and Carole Lee Miller.

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,
Lorna Hudson, Starr Jenkins, Marie Kammenzind, Ralph
Nunley, Joy Reed, Idabelle Shields, Dottie Jean & John
Stechman, Carol West, and Richard 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, friends, and family serving in the military:

Drew Descary (stationed in San Diego)

Laura Kraemer (in Maryland)

Michael Poe (stationed in Florida)

Joseph Sall (stationed in Pennsylvania)

Travis Hatakeyama (stationed in Germany)

Brendan Humphrey (on the USS Carl Vinson)

R. Brooks Anderson (on the USS North Dakota)

Sean Gillson (stationed on Whidbey Island)

Chris King (serving in the Middle East)

For all of us as we serve God wherever He calls us.

If you have a prayer concern, please call the Church Office
at 805-543-5451.

This article is another in a series about those who have included our church in their will or trust. Kathy and Tom Coull are two additional members who have made plans to share their estate with the church. Tom passed on from our congregation several years ago but he and Kathy made their plans decades earlier. Kathy described their desire to honor the church as an important part of their lives, wanting to help it pursue its mission for generations to come. Their ultimate gift will be used locally to fill the greatest need.

Tom and Kathy have served the church in several ways.

Tom was an elder while Kathy has been a deacon, taught Sunday School, and participates as an usher.

How would you like to support our church? Have you thought about that time when you are no longer able to personally take part? Consider endowing a portion of your lifetime giving.

Gifts to our church's Endowment Fund can be used to fund worship, missions, education, youth, stewardship, or property maintenance, or other needs, for examples. What is your favorite part of church life? If you have included the church in your will you are invited to let the church know. You may wish to proclaim it thru an article like this.

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

Even a modest gift will make a difference.



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

San Luis Obispo

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TWO SERVICE SCHEDULE

8:45 AM SERVICE

EDUCATION HOUR at 10 am

11:00 AM SERVICE