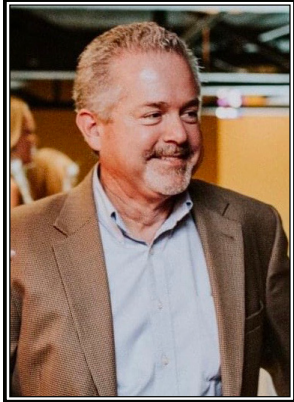


**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk

January 2021



Happy New Year!

Greetings to you and blessings in Christ as we begin a new year together.

My guess is that most of us are well prepared to say goodbye to 2020, with its disruptions and losses—with the limitations that remain with us even into this new year. It was a tough year in so many ways, though I'm glad we got to journey through it together.

We'll do the less-than-good news first. We still need to be closed for public worship and other gatherings. It will be a while before we see the impact of Christmas celebrations, and so we'll err on the side of caution as we see what comes next. So far the guidelines we have chosen to keep each other safe have been effective! As I write this we have not had a single reported COVID infection that can be traced to a church activity. We've come this far, and we won't

let our guard down just yet.

On the other hand, the distribution of vaccines gives us all some hope that the end of this might be just around the next few corners, and that's very good news.

This January, as with last year, we'll be talking about what it means to be the church. I do this every year to start things off—it's a way of centering ourselves for the year ahead, of getting our focus in the right place so we can be blessings to each other and to our community. You'll hear this in each message starting on January 10th—we'll memorize a version of this sentence:

An effective church is built on a foundation of Jesus Christ, and expressed through fellowship, worship, discipleship and mission.

So often we can lose sight or lose focus of our core values and mission. This series of messages, built around this single sentence, will help us set the right tone for 2021.

In the coming year, assuming that we will open up again at some point, we'll want to be ready to be a healthier, better, and more effective church in this community. We've learned so much about new ways to share our worship experience, and much of that will remain even after we open. I want to strengthen our partnership with Front Porch as an extension of our outreach to thousands of college students here in SLO. I look forward to extending our prayer ministry, growing our mission work, and to enjoying face-to-face fellowship opportunities. I want for us to start creating strategies for what First Pres SLO will be in the years ahead, knowing that flexibility and adaptability will be much higher on the list than they used to be! (Maybe that's the most important lesson we learned in the Year of COVID.)

Mostly, I want us to focus on what it will mean and what it will take to be the most effective witness to Jesus Christ that we can be, this year and in the years ahead. That's what we're called to do. That's the only real measure of our impact as a church.

And so I'll say again: Happy New Year to you! I look forward to serving you, and to serving alongside you as we grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Blessings to you and yours in this new year,

Pastor John

CHILDREN'S ED

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you!

Even with all the weirdness that was and is 2020 we had a pretty good year. We have managed to stay in touch and connected to our families and have even been able to reach out to some new families.

We reached our goal with the See's Candy fundraiser and look forward to putting those funds to work, in God's name, for First Pres SLO. Thank you to everyone who contributed! Your generosity is truly a blessing.

We managed to pull off a Children/Youth/Family Christmas program. I mean - come on - it was pretty great. It was challenging but fun to do and we hope you were blessed by it. Everyone really stepped up.

It's been fun to see pictures of what the kids and families are doing with their Advent Kits. Thank you to those of you who picked up kits and are putting them to use and sharing your creativity.

Looking forward to what 2021 has in store for us. We are ready and raring to go. Safely of course.

Blessing to you all,
The Children's Ed Committee



YOUTH

Youth Group is back to Zoom Meetings. We have encouraged the Youth to look at this time as a blessing and make the most of it. We have a great group of kids and they are doing amazingly well with all the changes and different ways of doing things.

We continue to send them challenges - and show off their efforts at Youth Group. The latest challenge was an ugly sweater cookie decorating challenge. The youth and their families participated and we got some ugly - I mean creative - cookies. Next, an ugly mask challenge.

The Youth participated in the Children/Youth/Family Christmas Program and it was great to see their faces.

The Youth continue to enjoy Minecraft - when it works - and are looking forward to other team building on line games to enjoy together.

We have been following along with the “Bible In Community” schedule for our lessons. The Youth always have great insight into the scriptures and how they pertain to their lives today.

We’re ready for you 2021 - Bring it on!

Happy Holidays to you all and thank you for your continued support!

First Pres SLO Youth

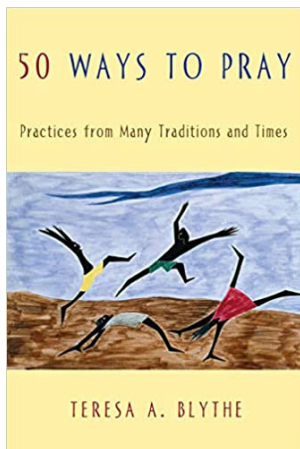


LIBRARY REVIEW

50 Ways to Pray: Practices from Many Traditions and Times by Teresa A. Blythe is a book that has been added to the library and is available for borrowing.

This book will provide at least fifty ways you may take steps in a lifelong walk with God. It is written for you, the seeker and sojourner, as well as you, the church leader, youth minister, retreat facilitator, or worship planner. It is for all of us who thought we only knew one way to pray. The explosion of interest today in Christian mystics, ancient prayer practices, and guided meditations speaks to a need for more hands-on tools that will help us pray in traditional as well as new and exciting ways. This book is intended to address that need.

Each of the exercises includes not only instructions on how to use it as a prayer practice, but also some background, an introduction, a statement of intention, and tips to help you become comfortable with the practice. For those of you wanting to lead these practices in a group, there are special instructions and information in the Leader's Guide at the end of the book. (Review from Amazon)



FRONT PORCH

Front Porch has much to be thankful for this year. First, for the incredible support from people in this congregation and throughout the area, and to the churches in the Presbytery that have allowed Front Porch to make its budget for the year and even a little more. Front Porch will be starting 2021 in a comfortable financial position. Progress is being made on improving the relationship between Front Porch and Presbytery and working out some of the misconceptions on both sides that have existed for years. COVID restrictions have brought out creativity and flexibility in programming that could not have been imagined. God found amazing ways to share the love of Jesus with college students at Cal Poly and Cuesta!

Classes at Cal Poly start on January 6 with another quarter of virtual learning. I'm excited to see what new and creative ways the staff will find to connect with students. I'll keep you posted.

Please keep all college students in your prayers for strength and guidance in their studies and Front Porch for being a place to share the love of our Savior in unexpected ways.

Susan Updegrove
Chair, Front Porch Board

BOOK BROWSERS

Book Browsers is starting our 20-21 year of book discussions. We will be meeting in Zoom meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. These are the books we will be reading this year.

- Jan. *Dreaming in French* by Alice Kaplan
- Feb. *Say Nothing* by Patrick Radden Keefe
- Mar. *The Daughter's Tale* by Armando Correa
- Apr. *That Churchill Woman* by Stephanie Barron
- May *Water From My Heart* by Charles Martin

Questions: Please contact Diane Shervem at dshervem@charter.net or 805-459-9844.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

- January 5 – Dorothy Phippen
- January 5 – Mary Butler

Happy Birthday to all others with January birthdays. Our church records may be incomplete. If we have overlooked someone, please contact the church office.

by Gloria DeKleine

FROM THE ELLIOTT'S

Fifty-two years ago, just before our daughter, Heather, was born, we visited First Pres SLO . It wasn't long before we became a part of this church family, and through all the years since, it has been a true family for us.

As many of you already know, we are embarking on a new adventure. We will be moving (probably in February) to a retirement community called Touchmark in Prescott to be near our son Philip and his family. We are excited about the move, but also very sad about having to leave so many friends behind.

Our new address will be:
3180 Touchmark Blvd. #313
Prescott, AZ 86301-5716

Our phone will be:
928-708-3313

With love in Christ,
Cliff and Lois Elliott

P.S. - come visit us - Prescott is a beautiful place!

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

Please pray for our church family in this new year, especially

For Pastor **John D'Elia** as he guides our congregation,

For our **Elders** as they lead us during this challenging time,

For the **Deacons** as they care for our church family,

For **Jen Rabenaldt** and others as they stay in touch with our children and youth,

For the Health Care workers and care givers in our community,

For those people worried about their jobs and businesses,

For FPC SLO members, friends and family who are undergoing treatments for various health issues, including COVID,

For our church's seniors, especially those who are confined to their homes or care centers during this time of isolation,

For the friends and family of Barbara Wines who passed away in December,

For members, family & support personnel serving in the military,

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 or write me at gdeklein@calpoly.edu.

God bless us all,
Gloria DeKleine

GREEN PASTURES GREEN PASTURES MINISTRY TEMPORARILY CLOSED

The Green Pastures ministry that provides needs assistance to 200-400 community members a year, is temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 virus and the difficulty in providing a safe environment to administer the program.

During the interim the Green Pastures staff is providing funding to other Community organizations such as the Salvation Army to provide assistance for those in need. Green Pastures will reopen when the Church campus is open again and it is safe for staff to offer this mission.

Your continued donations to Green Pastures are important to provide for current needs and to continue this important mission in the future.

ENDOWMENT CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

AN ENDOWMENT TO HONOR DORI LARSON

THE DORIE LARSON GREEN PASTURES ENDOWMENT, is the latest addition to the First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo Endowment. This new fund was added to the Endowment at the Session meeting December, 2020, created and funded by an anonymous, generous donor who has worked with Dorie changing lives through the outreach of Green Pastures.

The anonymous donor stated, after joining Frist Pres in the med 2010's "Right away, I knew I needed to become a member of Green Pastures ministry!!" The donor sensed that the clients helped by Green Pastures would be similar to those the donor spent a career helping.

The donor added "My passion for this work was quickly rewarded. Other volunteers in our group possessed the same compassion and willingness to aid our clients that I have!! And our fearless leader, and I mean fearless, **Dorie Larson**, set a tone and led our combined efforts with humor and grit!!" I have long admired Dorie for these qualities. They have singled her out as someone people want to know, to be close to. Her love for fellow humans is palpable!! I wanted to leave some "permanent" reminder in place that will go on contributing to the work that she (and I) have loved so dearly."

In addition to Green Pastures, the donor worked on Vacation Bible School for several years.

Have you prepared your will? Now! is the best time to do it.

If you are currently doing tax or estate planning and/or feel led to include a gift to the First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo in your financial or estate planning, please contact any member of Endowment Committee: Don Green, Jerry Kaml, Bert Townsend, Dorothy Truesdale, Roger Verity, or Virginia Walter (Chair). If you haven't already done so, please consider inserting one simple statement in our wills: *after all my bills are paid, 10% of my estate will go to First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo*

MISSION

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

The Alternative Gift Fair was a huge success this year thanks to the dedication of many people. Even though we could not hold it in person as we have in the past, over \$12,000.00 in donations had been received by mid December. Thank you to all of the many people who gave to the various charities during this time of great need. Special recognition and thanks go to the people who worked hard to make this year's AGF work as a virtual event: Mary and Harry Butler, coordinators of the fair; Steve Brown and Ben Parker for contacting the local and international charities; Brooks and Cherie Smith who made the contact with Memorial Presbyterian Church in Mobile, Alabama; Gloria DeKleine and Cherie Smith for making the lovely gift cards; and Kenneth Hand, Diane Shervem, and Bert Townsend for help from the church office. A huge thank you goes to Art DeKleine who took on the printing and mailing of the brochure, put it on line, and handled all the incoming donations. It has been a blessing working with so many people who gave generously of their time and money to this extremely worthwhile annual Missions outreach.

Karen Wiles,
Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee

PRESBYTERY OF SANTA BARBARA

RISING TO THE MOMENT

Understanding and Responding to Our Times

Coming in January is a program the Church in the World Committee is very excited about. Dr. Tracey Stringer, pastor of a multi-ethnic church in L.A. will be offering to our Presbytery: Rising to the Moment: Understanding and Responding to Our Times, a five-week project to equip followers of Christ to Rise to the Moment by beginning the journey towards anti-Racism."

Sundays, January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31. 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Click this link watch a video introduction about the program from Tracey Stringer: [Video Intro](#)

Our Committee encourages you -- and also your friends -- to register for the program. The program is free of charge. The Presbytery is underwriting this program.

Click here to find out more: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2672517519728448/>.

Click here to sign up, it's free: <https://bit.ly/RiseSignUp>

Chuck Curtis & Ted Brandt
Church in the World Committee
Presbytery of Santa Barbara

Questions? Contact Chuck Curtis (ccurtis@fpcsb.org)
or Ted Brandt (ted@fpox.org)

EPIPHANY STARS COMMITTEE

EPIPHANY STARS ARE COMING!

We look forward to continuing this Epiphany tradition of receiving a star with a word for you to consider throughout the year. The tradition began with Marge Rowe many years ago and continued with Doris Bryan.

This year's stars will be handed out (with regard to safe protocols) on **Saturday, Jan. 9** between **10:00 and 12:00** at a drive by in the church parking lot.

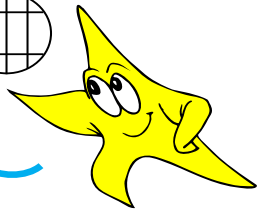
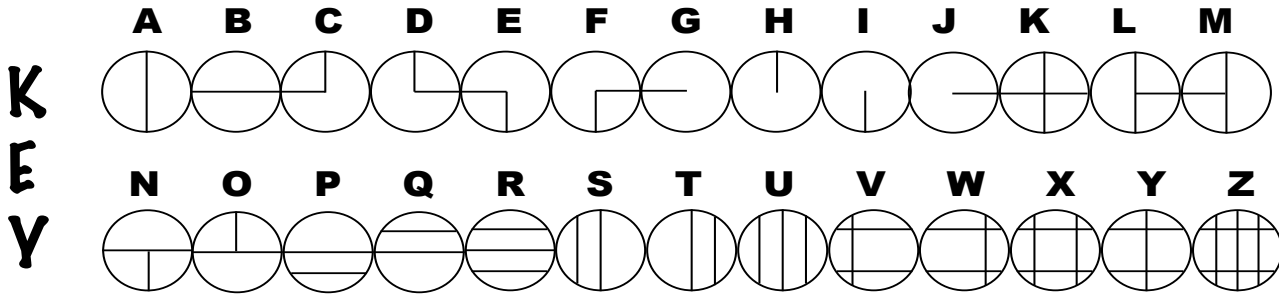
If you are unable to be there please call or email the church office by Jan. 6. Leave your name and number at fpcsl.org (805) 543-5451 or Pam Rodewald at psrmony@mac.com (805) 215-2396. We will deliver your star to you!

Committee: Pam Rodewald, Margo Smith, Kathy Wolff, Gloria DeKleine and Susan Updegrove

The Wise Men

The wise men's journey Matthew 3:7-11 (ASV)

Use the key to complete the verses below about the three wise men.



7. Then Herod privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the



appeared. 8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out

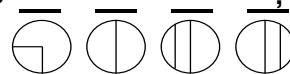
exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may

come and



him. 9. And they, having heard the king, went their

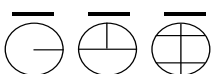
way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the



went before them, till it came and

stood over where the young child was. 10. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceed-

ing great



. 11. And they came into the house and saw the young child with

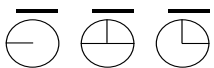
Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered

unto him

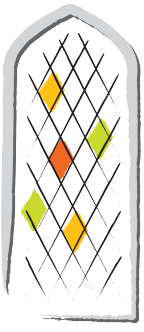


, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12. And being warned of

in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own



country another way.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

San Luis Obispo

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email: churchoffice@fpcslo.org
web: fpcslo.org

PLEASE NOTE:

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING JANUARY 31

Save the Date --- our annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, January 31 immediately following our 10am Zoom service. Learn about budget for 2021, fill some vacant positions and hear committee reports for the last year. What a year it has been.