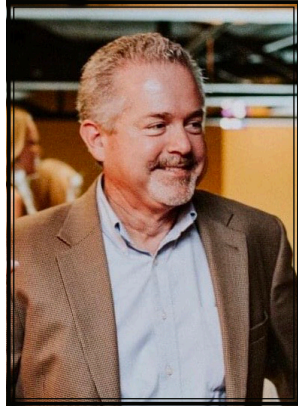


**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk
January 2022



Happy New Year to you all!

It was in January of 2020 that I came for what I thought was an assignment lasting four months, and look where we've ended up. Transitions and COVID aren't the only stories—we have accomplished some wonderful things together, and it has been a pleasure to be with you for these last two years.

Each January I move through a cycle of messages about the church. If you were here in 2020 and 2021, you know that I build these reflections around a sentence that goes like this:

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

We are able to move ahead in unity when we remember who we are and what we're about, and this sentence keeps our collective eye on the ball. This will be important in January as you will receive the Mission Study Survey to complete. This is an important part of the pastoral transition process—the questions and your responses are designed to help us discern what happens next in the life of First Pres SLO. This is an exciting time!

As you reflect on the Mission Study Survey, have in mind the ways that these expressions of the church are a part of your own life. It might be helpful to review them here.

Fellowship is the building of community in the church, from the welcome at the door to the deep relationships we nurture in commitment groups. The social events we offer are meant to help all of us get to know each other better. The Bible in Community and other groups give people a chance to form deeper and more lasting friendships in Christ.

Worship is the way we express our adoration for God as Father, Son, and Spirit—it is how we offer praise and honor to the God who made us and loves us and calls us. A lot of this happens on Sunday mornings, but I hope that in the prayers and music and messages on Sundays, we all keep worshiping throughout the week.

Discipleship is the process by which we become more like Jesus. It involves both learning about our faith, and also shaping our lives according to what we have learned. We have so many innovative ideas for Christian Education and Formation to share in the coming year. Some of this will happen in Bible studies, in classes, and in personal mentoring and conversation.

Mission is where our faith turns outward in service. We balance our call to share the gospel message to the ends of the earth (including around the corner), with the equally important duty to care for those with physical, financial, and other practical needs. The Matthew 25 Project will help give us some new (and renewed!) focus for our Kingdom work. When that is joined with the service projects we already do, this will be an exciting part of 2022!

As we move through this series of messages this month, allow them to challenge you and inform your own responses to the survey. My prayer is that this annual time of self-reflection will lead to closer relationships, deeper faith, and greater service.

Happy New Year to you, and may God continue to bless this wonderful church family.

Pastor John

Note: Our planning for a trip to Israel-Palestine will speed up this month. We will select a seven-day to an eight-day window between April 26 and May 5. If you would like to be a part of this wonderful pilgrimage, please let me know! JD

CHILDREN'S ED

Wow! How can it be 2022? What a fun, weird, and different year 2021 was. We are so blessed to have such a supportive congregation and Staff! Thank you for everything you have blessed us with through your prayers, donations, and grace. We are really looking forward to whatever the new year brings.

Wednesdays at the Rock will be on a break from December 29 to January 4. We will return on January 5. For our first session of the new year, we will learn about Worship and what that means—through liturgy, music, and scripture. The plan is to present a worship program at the end of this session, sometime in the spring.

We love having kids in the Nursery on Sundays. It has been wonderful to be able to do some of the things we were able to do in the past. We are being cautious and safe and following all protocols.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Delaney and Jenny for all their work and creativity these past few months. We are a small but mighty crew and we love spending time and learning with the kids.

Happy New Year to all ...

Children's Ed

Jen, Delaney, Jenny, and Sarah Jane

"You may not always see the results of your kindness, but every bit of positive energy you contribute to the world makes it a better place for us all."

Words to live by for 2022

YOUTH

The Youth have continued to demonstrate what it means to be a true disciple, especially during the Advent season. We have been collecting lightly worn socks, sweaters, jackets, and slippers for our Blessing Box during the colder months, and it is a joy to inform you that the donation bin on the third floor is overflowing! During the month of December, our Youth took the time to reflect and share what they most look forward to during the Advent Season, and why. Their responses were diverse and thought provoking. As always, we made plenty of time to have fun and bond. If you visit to the third floor,

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you will notice a colorful display of holiday decorations! We are excited for the New Year as we finalize our Youth calendar and are looking forward to the potential outreach and mission opportunities. We are always grateful for the supper that is provided by our Youth families. All members of the congregation are welcome to provide a meal or stop by to say hello while we gather around the table at 5 p.m. each Sunday.

This church is truly blessed by our Youth, their generous families, and by you. Thank you for your continued love and support.

The Youth team,
Jen and Sarah Jane

A STORY FROM BIBLE STUDY AT THE VILLAGES

We have been working hard on sharing with the kids, the youth, and our older adults about what it means to be a Matthew 25 Church. They have all learned and accepted the challenge. The Bible study group at The Villages has really taken on the task of keeping the Blessing Box at First Pres SLO full. Each week someone comes into Bible Study with a bag full of things to add to the Blessing Box. Recently I received a call from one of our regulars. She has been busy spreading the word about the blessing box to the residences. Anyway, she went on to tell me that her kitchen was full of bags of things for the Blessing Box and could I come to get them? There were socks, hats, jackets, toiletries and nonperishable items - lots of them. It has been so fun to watch them be excited about this challenge and find ways they can contribute. What a blessing this group is. I look forward to visiting with them each week and to discussing God's word.

Keep them in your prayers as they too are navigating the challenges of COVID.

Blessings abound,
Jen



FRONT PORCH

As winter quarter is starting, it is useful to look back on last quarter. Front Porch staff were able to pivot again to a “Open with restrictions” format. Sometimes those changes had unexpected benefits. For instance, all coffee was served by a volunteer or staff instead of students serving themselves. Staff and volunteers noted they made more and quicker connections to new students, because they had eye-to-eye contact in those interactions above their masks. The weather cooperated so that all Wednesday night meals could be served outside and students found places to sit on the sidewalk, reminiscent of Thursday night Farmer’s market. The staff got their daily workout at work, running back and forth between the kitchen and the front porch, delivering hot food! While the number of students who visited Front Porch each day may have been down a bit from previous years, all benefited from the welcoming and accepting atmosphere of Front Porch.

Front Porch thanks you again for your continued and generous support of this college ministry and wish you the best 2022 ever.

Susan Updegrove
Front Porch Chair

ENDOWMENT FUND CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

A WAY TO DONATE TO FIRST PRES WITH TAX FREE FUNDS

Yes, you can use **tax free** money to donate to the church. Anybody 70.5 years or older can make a charitable gift from a regular IRA. Technically, it is known as a “*Qualified Charitable Distribution*” (QCD.) The principal requirement is that the gift must be sent directly to First Presbyterian Church by the IRA administrator. The administrator would be your bank or investment company.

Here are the main **advantages** of making your donation via QCD:

Once you authorize the QCD it will be automatic--monthly if you prefer.

The amount you authorize will count toward your required minimum distribution (RMD).

The amount you gift will not be taxed as it would be if the IRA funds were paid to you.

The gift from your IRA is equivalent to a charitable deduction because it is subtracted from income.

On an immediate, practical level, if you have **not yet met** your RMD this year, you can take this action now.

To help you get started, the Church Treasurer has prepared a set of instructions for setting up a transfer of funds to the Church—yours for the asking.

Please consider making a QCD to become part of our Endowment Fund.

Note: The year-to-date growth of the Endowment looks particularly good, boding well for a healthy 2022 allotment to help fund Church operation, programs, and missions.

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: Peggy Estes, Don Green, Jerry Kaml, Ray McKelvey, Diane Shervem, Bert Townsend, or Virginia Walter (Chair). If you have not already done so, please consider inserting one simple statement in our wills: After all my bills are paid, 10 percent of my estate will go to First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo.

Even a modest gift will make a difference.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy Birthday to the following seniors (over 85) who will celebrate birthdays in January:

January 5 – Dorothy Pippen

January 5 – Mary Butler

January 15 – Joan Knowlton

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

MISSION STUDY

Before a new pastor can be called for our church, we must complete a Mission Study to be accepted by our Session and the Presbytery. The survey you receive in the mail will help us identify the current health of our church and its ministry. EVERY VOICE is important as we strive to discern God's will and plan for the future of our church. What are we doing well? What is not going well? Where do we want to be in five years? Please pray for God's guidance as you complete the survey. There are open-ended questions as well as ranking questions. We eagerly look forward to hearing from each of you. The survey could be completed in 15 minutes. It also can take longer depending on how much or how little you want to share. The committee is deeply grateful and thankful for your time and thoughts.

Warmest regards and thanks,
The Mission Study Committee
Nellie Beecher
Kay Emmons
Ray McKelvey
Catherine Petty, Chair
Virginia Walter

BOOK BROWSERS

Book Browsers will continue to meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 via ZOOM.

- Jan. 4 Why Fish Don't Exist by Lulu Miller
- Feb. 1 When We Were Young and Brave
by Hazel Gaynor
- Mar. 1 Brigid of Kildare by Heather Terrell
- Apr. 5 Last Boat out of Shanghai by Helen Zia
- May 3 The Nature of Fragile Things
by Susan Meisner

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Shervem at 805-459-9844 or dshervem@charter.net.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

Please pray for our church family, especially for the following:

For **Pastor John D'Elia** as he leads our congregation into the New Year;

For our **Elders** as they guide our congregation in making decisions about the life of our church;

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

For the new **Elders** and **Deacons** who were recently voted in by the congregation;

And a special Thank You to those going off Session or the Board of Deacons;

For the members of our various church committees as they help us find new ways for our church family to have fellowship together in the new year;

For the **Mission Study Committee** members as they help us move forward;

For **Jen Rabenaldt** and others as they work with our children and youth;

For **Scott Glysson, Sarah Jane Scott**, and the wonderful musicians in our church;

For our church members, friends and family who are undergoing treatments for various health issues;

For our church's seniors, especially those who are alone in their homes or care centers, and for their care givers;

For those who support our worship services with their technical help to make it possible for live streaming and recording of the services;

For members, family, and 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 gdekley@calpoly.edu.

God bless us all,
Gloria DeKleine

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

The Alternative Gift Fair was a big success this year thanks to the generosity and dedication of many people. Even though we could not hold the Gift Fair in person again this year as we had in the past, over \$9,000 in donations had been received by mid-December.

Special recognition and thanks go to the many people who worked hard to make this year's AGF work as a virtual event for the second year in a row. Mary Butler and Art DeKleine coordinated the Fair; Art put the brochure together and handled the printing, mailing, and donations; Steve Brown and Ben Parker contacted the local and international charities; Gloria DeKleine made the lovely gift cards; and Kenneth Hand, Diane Shervem, and Bert Townsend gave valuable assistance from the church office.

The Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee thanks all of you who donated to the 12 charities that were in the Fair this year. It has been a blessing working with so many who gave generously of their time and money to this extremely worthwhile annual Missions outreach.

Karen Wiles, Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee

CHURCH DIRECTORIES

First Presbyterian Church has a history of handing out newly updated Church Directories at the Congregational Meeting held each year at the end of January. The directory contains names, addresses, phone numbers, and cell phone numbers of FPCSLO members, inactive members, and friends of our congregation.

We will be working in January on the new directory for 2022. We would like to know if your contact information has changed over the past year. We also want to know if you do not want part of your contact information included in the new directory.

Please contact Gloria DeKleine at gdeklein@calpoly.edu or call her cell at 805-801-9627. You can also contact the church office via phone (805-543-5451) or by writing to the church office at churchoffice@fpcslo.org

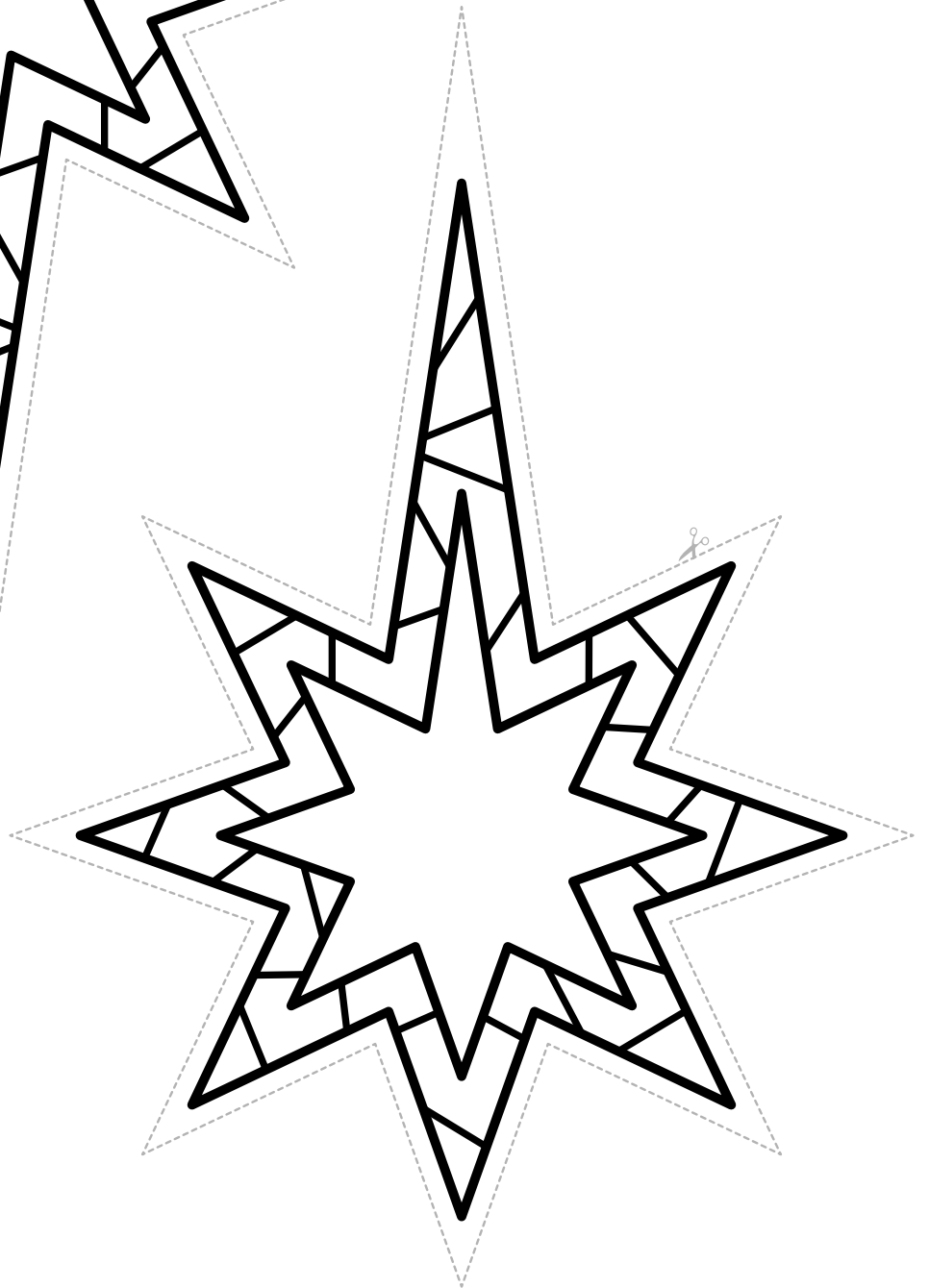
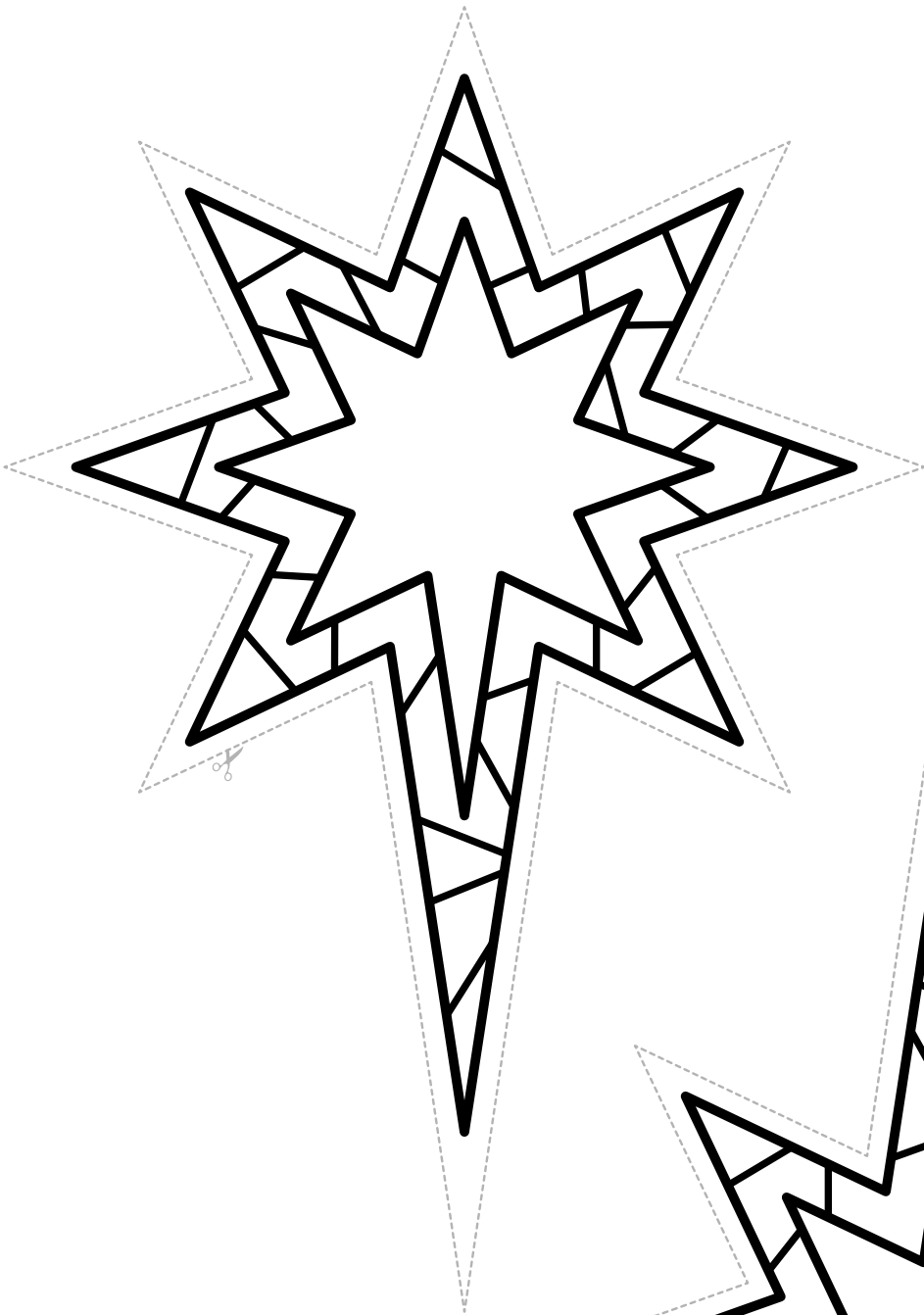
We know it is past time for a new picture directory and hope to work on that this year.

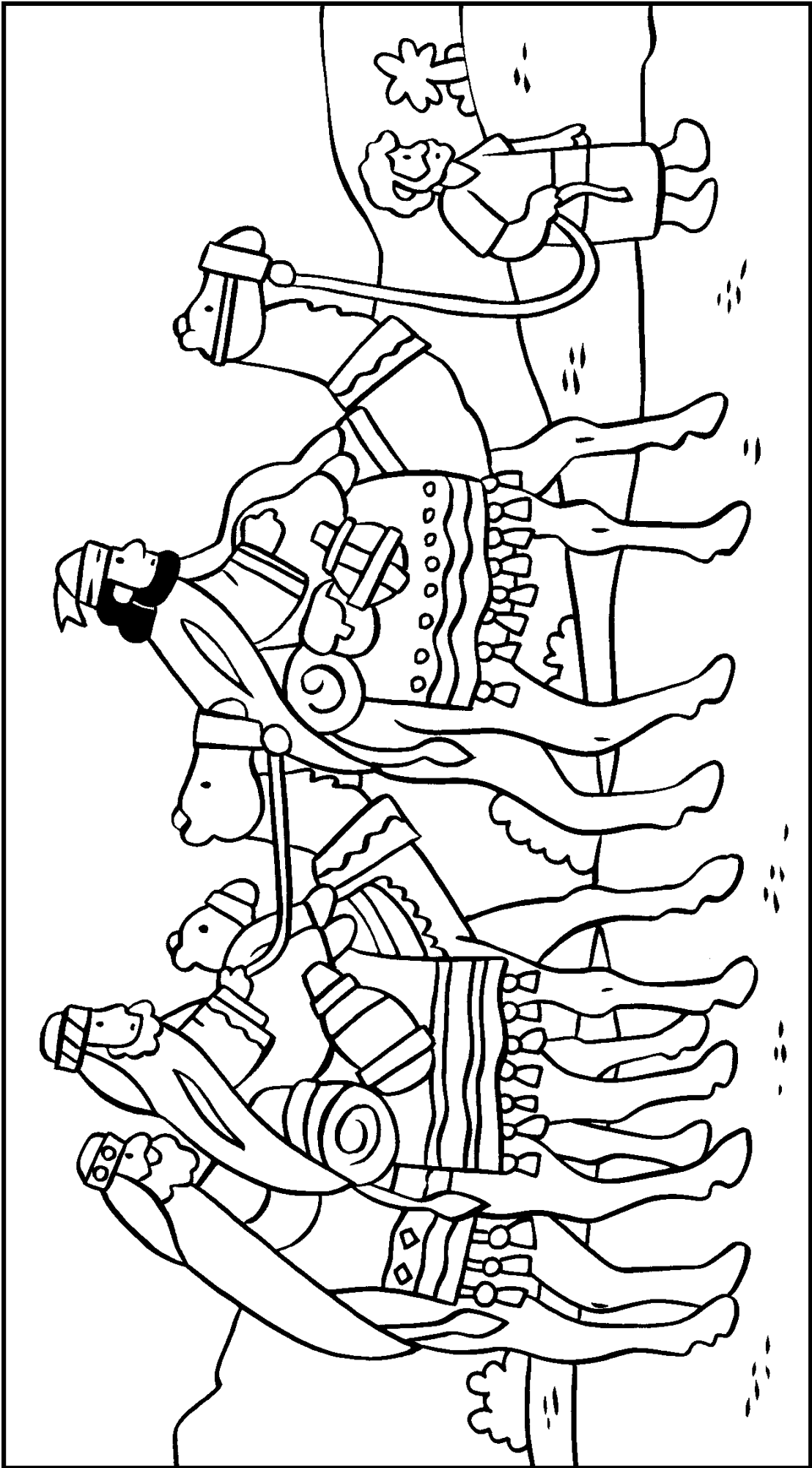
Thank you for your help.

Gloria DeKleine

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

At our annual Advent celebration last Thursday, FPCSLO PW awarded Peggy Estes the annual Presbyterian Women Honorary Life Membership award. The Presbyterian Church established the award more than one hundred years ago to honor faithful service to the church and to PW. As per tradition, the most recently honored award winner, Kate Murray, introduced Peggy and presented the award. Peggy is a woman of many gifts and has had a lifetime of service in several areas. She served in the Army where she met and married Allen. FPCSLO has enjoyed Peggy's leadership. She is currently serving on the Board of Deacons and the PW Board. We all join FPCSLO Presbyterian Women in thanking Peggy for her work among us.







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San Luis Obispo

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