

FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk
March 2023



Welcome to Lent.

We've just celebrated Ash Wednesday, the first day of the season of Lent. For us, Lent is the 40 non-Sundays between today and Easter. Why just the non-Sundays? Because even as we enter this time of reflection and repentance, we know how the rest of the story works out—Jesus comes, he loves, he dies, and he is resurrected from the dead. We remember and celebrate that truth on Sundays, even during Lent.

But what about Lent?

This is my favorite introduction to the season, taken from a book by Henri Nouwen called *Show Me The Way*. Lent is a hard season for us because it represents a call to repentance, reflection and a handful of other things we're not so good at. Still, taking 40 days or so to think about Christ's work in our lives before we dive into the happy hymns and chocolate bunnies of Easter can't be a bad thing. Here's the quote:

God's mercy is greater than our sins.

There is an awareness of sin that does not lead to God but to self-preoccupation. Our temptation is to be so impressed by our sins and failures and so overwhelmed by our lack of generosity that we get stuck in a paralyzing guilt. It is the guilt that says: 'I am too sinful to deserve God's mercy.' It is the guilt that leads to introspection instead of directing our eyes to God. It is the guilt that has become an idol and therefore a form of pride.

Lent is the time to break down this idol and to direct our attention to our loving Lord. The question is: 'Are we like Judas, who was so overcome by his sin that he could not believe in God's mercy any longer and hanged himself, or are we like Peter who returned to his Lord with repentance and cried bitterly for his sins?'

The season of Lent, during which winter and spring struggle with each other for dominance, helps us in a special way to cry out for God's mercy.

Isn't that beautiful and haunting and challenging all at the same time? I tend to think so much of my own failures that I forget that my sin is not the point. God's grace, given to us through Jesus Christ, is the true point of my life's story, and yours...and yours...and yours.

We live out that struggle between the seasons on a daily basis, between the death and darkness of winter and the restored and rediscovered life of spring. Between the awareness of just how far we stray from God, and the shock at what he has accomplished in order to draw us near. Lent is our time to pause and take notice of what is happening around us and in us. It's not just for self-reflection, though that's a key part of it. Lent is a time to sharpen our focus on Christ and his world, on the needs of people around us, on the gifts we've been given to meet those needs, and to discover all over again the hope that we have because of the Easter miracle.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Easter will come, but for now we try to re-create the sense of conviction that being in God's presence prompts in each one of us. To repent and ask for forgiveness. And to anticipate that day when life wins the battle once and for all.

One last thing. During this season I invite all of you to join me in a Lent Challenge—saying the Lord's Prayer five times each day during this season. It's an exercise, a discipline, designed to help us align our hearts to Jesus using the words he taught us to pray.

Welcome to Lent.

With Blessings,

Pastor John

CHILDREN'S ED

Psalm 98:4

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music.

We are learning all about how we can make a joyful noise and honor God. The kids are

learning that noise can be very quiet as well as being so very meaningful. There is a time and a place to make a joyful noise—whatever that may look or sound like, which is pretty much all the time!

The kids believe the following are ways to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. . .

Being helpful, praying, singing, love, caring, jumping, art. . .

We hope to present a program at the end of May (May 24 to be exact) to share with you what we have learned and created during the program year.

The Children's Schedule

Sunday

Nursery open from 9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Sunday school - Kids are excused from Worship right after the "Time with Children."

For those kids who wish to stay in worship, we provide fidget boxes, books, and workbooks (located in Wines Chapel).

Wednesday

Wednesdays at the Rock

4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday

Bible Lesson, snacks, crafts, gym,
and music

All kids 3 years through 6th are welcome

Childcare

Childcare is available upon request. If you need childcare for a church meeting or program on campus, let us know. We would be happy to accommodate that.

Join us in making a joyful noise whenever and wherever you can!

Jen, Brooke, Bella, Ash, and Cole



**God's re-creation
of the new day!**



YOUTH

I just want to say that our Youth are AMAZING! They are busy, but they love First Pres SLO and the First Pres SLO family.

Each week we share a meal together, have a Bible Lesson, do service projects as available, and have fun with games.

Our Youth are caring and compassionate and give me so much hope for the future.

All Youth 7th through 12th grade are welcome! We encourage you to invite any Youth you might now to join us. All are welcome.

Here's a great opportunity for you. Why don't you volunteer to provide a meal, join us for that meal, and share with us something from your life. It could be a story, a hobby, music, or introduce us to your favorite pet. We would love the opportunity to get to know you better. Give Jen a call and she'll set it up.

Jen, Bella, and Ash

Thanks for your continued support of our children and youth. We are so blessed by you and all you contribute.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

March 5 – Deon Dunaway – 85 this year

March 6 - Mary Ruth Mach

March 8 - Marilyn Sparks

March 15 – Donna Marshall – turns 85 this year

March 17 - Tom Sparks

March 21 - Shirley Keif

March 25 – Betty Priest – turns 85 this year

To everyone else with a March birthday.

Our church records may be incomplete. If we have overlooked someone, please contact the church office.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

Please pray for our church family, especially the following:

For **Pastor John D’Elia** as he leads our congregation;

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 **Jen Rabenaldt** and those who work with our children and youth;

For **Scott Glysson** and the many wonderful musicians in our church;

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

For the family and friends of Jo McRee who passed away in February;

For all of our church’s seniors, for their families and caregivers;

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 gdeklein@calpoly.edu.

God bless us all,
Gloria DeKleine

MISSIONS SOMETHING MORE

First Presbyterian Church is an amazingly generous church. Together with this congregation, we have donated over \$81,000 in 2023 to support organizations that minister to “the least of these” in our community and world. Matthew 25 calls for us to reach out to those marginalized by our society—the hungry, thirsty, sick, unclothed, imprisoned, and strangers. This outreach has been a combined effort of the Mission Committee using budgeted funds, endowment allotments, and restricted funds along with the Deacons and Presbyterian Women. The bulk of these funds were donated to local organizations—over \$46,000, followed by over \$27,000, to international groups and over \$7,000 to the Presbyterian Denominational Funds. These groups become the hands and heart of Jesus as they reach out into the

community and the world and meet the direct needs of people. They are the foundation of our church's Matthew 25 commitment. (Please see the attached summary of all donations.)

Are you looking for a more direct way to reach out and minister to those in need? Consider joining the folks who cook in the church kitchen each second Wednesday of the month to serve at 40 Prado as part of People's Kitchen or prepare part of a meal on your own each fourth Saturday, when our church provides dinner in support of CAPSLO, also at 40 Prado. Bake a batch of cookies to donate to the students at Cal Poly each finals week—three times a year (with March 19 being the call for cookies). Green Pastures is looking for a few more people to build teams to provide in-person counsel, prayer, and help to community members in need. If any of these activities appeal to you, reach out to Susan Updegrave, Missions Chair, or leave your name with Kenneth in the church office.

MISSIONS SUPPORTED BY FPCSLO

Local:

People's Kitchen: \$1,680
 CAPSLO: \$1,000
 Gift Cards for Christmas: \$1,400
 Shower the People: \$2,380
 Restorative Partners: \$1,465
 SLO4Home: \$4,810
 Lumina Alliance: \$2,000
 Friends of 40 Prado: \$1,690
 Front Porch: \$13,500
 Get on the Bus: \$2,500
 Noor Foundation: \$2,895
 People of Faith for Justice: \$400
 Food Bank Coalition: \$1,400
 Community Counseling Center: \$500
 Cuesta Food Bank: \$300
 Fort Hope: \$500
 Salvation Army: \$200
 Transitions Mental Health: \$800

CASA: \$1,000
 Habitat for Humanity: \$2,060
 Meals that Connect: \$400
 Santa Barbara Mission Conference: \$250
 Green Pastures: \$3,500 (not spent)
\$46,630

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS:

Care Corps: \$200
 God's Hidden Treasurers: \$9,010
 Haiti Educational Foundation: \$10,570
 New Horizons Foundation: \$2,000
 Lifewater: \$1,575
 Heifer International: \$1,890
 Equal Justice Initiative: \$1,000
 Wycliffe Bible Translators: \$800
\$27,045

DENOMINATIONAL MISSIONS:

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance: \$1,000
 One Great Hour of Sharing: \$530.75
 Peace and Global Witness Offering: \$2,123
 Christmas Joy Offering: \$245

Presbyterian Women

Kayenta Presbyterian Church: \$1,200 +
 clothes & household
 items for Christmas
 Thanks offering: \$1,992
 PW annual Mission: \$600

\$7,690.75

TOTAL DONATIONS FOR 2022 \$81,365.75

BOOK BROWSERS

Book Browsers will be meeting the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. via zoom. Please join us for discussions of the following books.

Mar. 7 The Lincoln Highway
by A. Towles

Apr. 4 The Madness of Crowds
by L. Penny

May 2 Tied to the Tracks
by S. Donati

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

ENDOWMENT FUND CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

FPC ENDOWMENT CONTINUES TO BENEFIT MISSIONS AND PROGRAMS

Our endowment took a hit in 2022, ending that year with a loss of nearly 19.2 percent. Anybody with personal investments is not surprised. But, there is plenty of good news. First, there was \$20,000 in new endowment donations last year. Second, the reserve part of the endowment, out of which allotments are drawn, remains strong, at over \$123,000. That is about 26 percent added on to the original donations. And, the reserve has already recovered by about 6 percent so far in 2023.

The Endowment and Budget and Finance Committees are recommending to Session a 4 percent (of year-end fund balance) allotment for 2023. When approved by Session, such an allotment will provide about \$31,049 for FPC missions, programs, music and worship, Christian Education and youth, and building maintenance and administration.

Since the first allotments in 1999, our endowment has provided over \$336,802 cumulative allotments. For examples, the endowment has provided approximately \$34,300 for OGHS, \$81,900 for the General Fund, and \$85,500 for Christian Education and Youth.

While our endowment provides annual allotments benefiting the church now, think of the endowment as a future asset. We are enjoying the benevolence of past donors, and it is up to us to likewise provide for the Church's future. The Church's future is in our hands.

AN EXAMPLE of how to make a difference for FPC's future could be to take advantage of life-income gift tax advantage. You can now make a one-time tax-free qualified charitable distribution of up to \$50,000 from your IRA to fund a gift that pays you income for life.

We extend a special thank you to all the present and past members and friends of First Pres who have included the church in their wills or trusts and those to have contributed to the creation of our endowment.

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 of the following members of the Endowment Committee: Peggy Estes, Don Green, Jerry Kaml, Ray McKelvey, Diane Shervem, Bert Townsend, or Virginia Walter—Chair. We can help guide you through this important process or steer you to the right people and resources.

“Even a modest gift will ‘make a difference.’”

PROPERTY

Okay, quiz time. What do the figures 37, 95, and 119 relate to? Answer: They are the ages in years of the Wilson Hall, Hart Building, and the Sanctuary—a total of 251 years of age of these wonderful buildings that serve our congregation and our community.

So, why the quiz? The Church Property Committee oversees all three structures and their separate challenges. The property expenses to serve these structures are considered on-going, but they do not meet the usual category of anticipated general expense items. But rather like your budget at home, these expenses are paid through an emergency reserve fund. Kind of like when you realize, like me, that my 25-year roof was installed in 2002. Oops! Wisely, I should have set aside funds in reserve to replace that roof. These reserve funds are like the function of our Church Capital Campaign.

And, as any responsible caretaker of facilities knows (whether a responsible tenant or owner), you have to set aside funds for those unexpected expenses. These facilities may include plumbing calls (remember the Thanksgiving Dinner potato peelings in the garbage disposal); water dripping in the corner due to a leaking roof; the heater going out right in the middle of the night in a cold snap; or the a/c going out in the middle of a heat wave; or in the case of FPCSLO -- malfunctioning fire doors, paving and painting the parking lot, worn-out carpeting (normal wear and tear), burned-out light bulbs; counter replacements; and the ever-challenging kitchen dishwasher (which is functioning quite brilliantly now!).

Property Committee has DONE incredible work tackling one challenge after another after another. Recently, the 2018 Church

Capital Campaign financed the repair and replacement of the Hart Building and Wilson Hall roofs (partnered with a solar panel system installation), the repair of HVAC systems in the Sanctuary and Wilson Hall, repair the flooring in all three buildings, and replacing and updating our kitchen.

New challenges arise with a sanctuary turret leak, a failing Hart Building furnace and fire doors repair, the outside lighting repairs, and the upgrade of bathroom plumbing fixtures. But today, we find the church capital campaign cupboard almost bare.

We need your help now. The Church Capital Campaign reserve estimate for all these projects is \$55,000. Already, generous donors have contributed \$25,640 to the fund in our Quiet Capital Campaign. And now, it is time to request your assistance. Can you help?

Please consider a donation to the Church Capital Campaign to help keep our wonderful, unique church facilities functioning.

Respectfully,
Property Committee

DEACONS

EASTER FLOWER DEDICATIONS:

A LOVING WAY TO HONOR LOVED ONES , BEAUTIFY THE SANCTUARY, AND SUPPORT THE DEACONS' FLOWER FUND

DEADLINE FOR DEDICATIONS: NOON, MONDAY, APRIL 3

Each Easter for many years, members of our church family have generously supported the Deacons' flower ministry by dedicating lovely floral plants in honor or in memory of loved ones. These spring plants beautify our

sanctuary on Easter morning, and then are delivered to the homebound, ill, bereaved, and others in our congregation. We have more than 60 people who will appreciate having a beautiful plant delivered to their home this Easter!

In addition, we have partnered with an important mental health program in our community to provide these beautiful blessings to our members. Our Easter flowers are being purchased through Growing Grounds Downtown—a store that provides work and training opportunities for clients of Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA), a non-profit organization.

Each loving dedication can be made for a suggested \$15 donation to the Deacons' Easter Flower Fund. Your personal dedication will be printed in the Easter Sunday Bulletin on April 9.

Please prayerfully consider supporting this ministry. You may send a check to the office or go to the church website and use the online giving link (details below) to make your donation. Whichever method you use, please make sure to note that your donation is for Easter Flowers and indicate whom you are honoring or memorializing. **Deacons will also be available to take accept your donations and dedications on Sundays after church on March 19, 26 and April 2.**

Suggested donation: \$15.00 -- Your donation supports the Deacons' Flower Fund; it is not for a purchase of plant to take home. The plants are delivered to those in need in our church family.

To send by check: First Presbyterian Church; P.O. Box 591; San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. Notation on check: Deacon EASTER Flower Fund. Please include a note about your dedication: "In Honor Of" (name or organization) or "In Memory Of" (name).

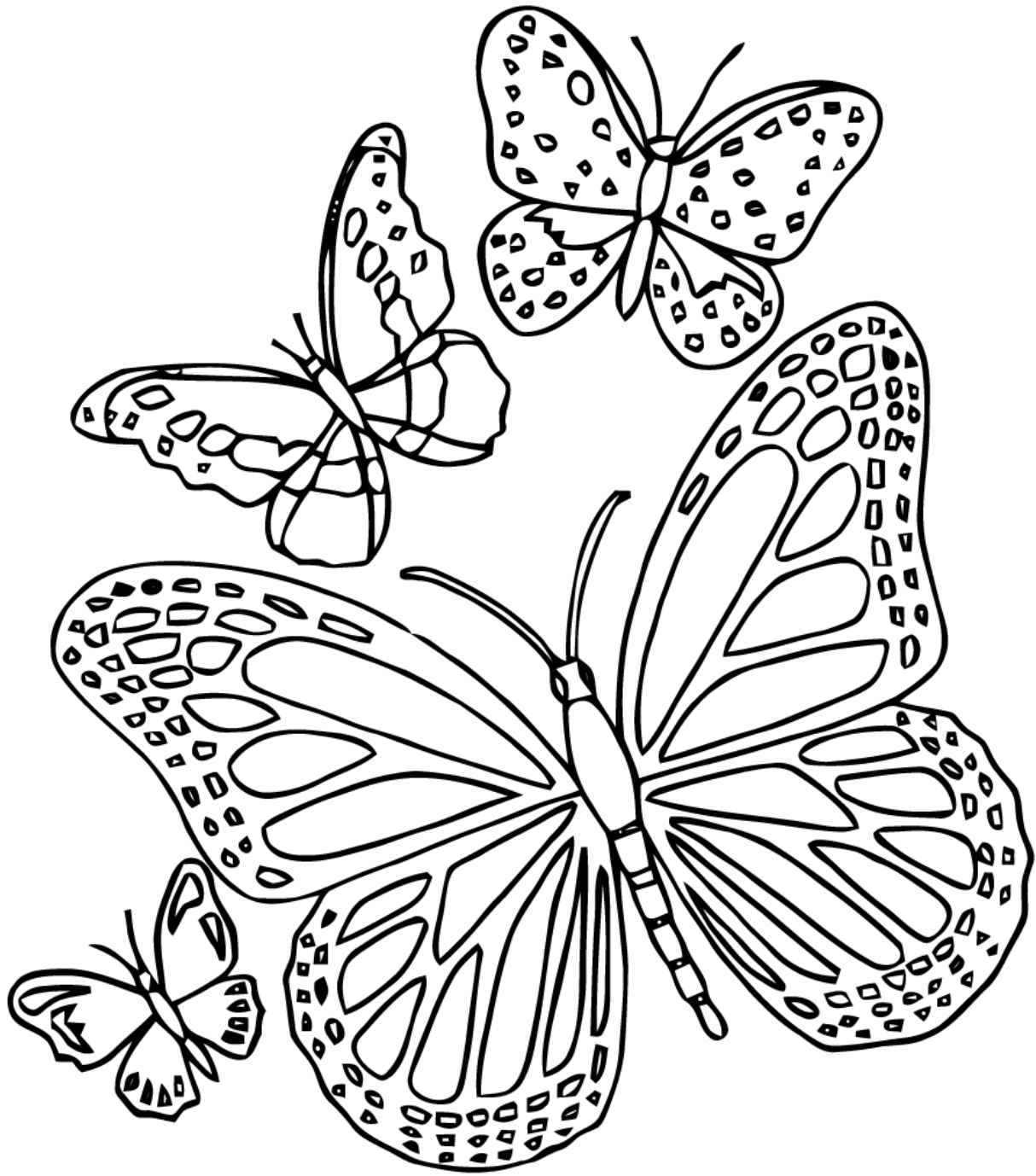
To donate on-line: Donation via church website: Go to www.fpcslo.org, click on Donate. Under Donations, select **Deacon's Flowers** and enter the amount. Don't forget to sign in to your account. After you enter the payment information, in the NOTES section, type Deacon Easter Flower Fund: "In Honor Of" (name) or "In Memory Of" (name). If you prefer, you can call or email Kathy Wolff with your questions and dedication information. Phone: 805 782-9790 or dkwolff@charter.net.

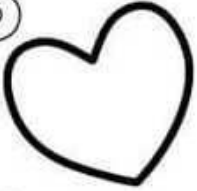
DEADLINE FOR DEDICATIONS IS
MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2023.



DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

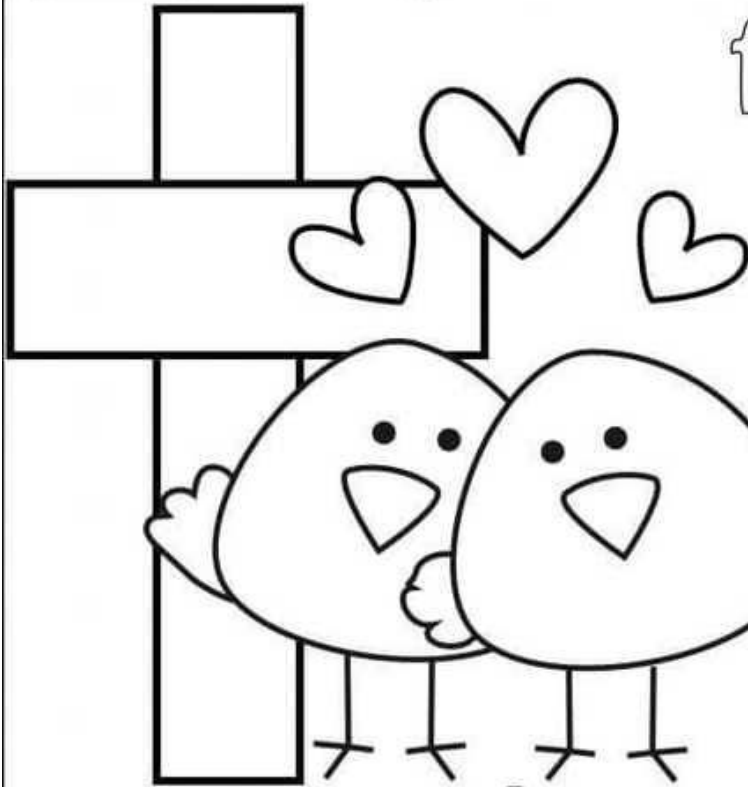
If you have an interest in helping to deliver Easter plants, please contact Kathy Wolff at the email address or phone number above.

The Deacons thank you heartily for your support of this Mission.



Beloved, let us
LOVE one 
another,

for  



love
is from
God,
and

whoever loves
is born of God, and
   knows God.

ALL ABOUT

GOD'S LOVE

Draw a picture showing God's love.

Write your favorite Bible verse about God's love.

FOR GOD SO LOVED the WORLD he gave his only SON

-John 3:16

God's love is...

Love one another.

Jesus

JESUS LOVES ME

GOD IS LOVE

-1 John 4:8





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San Luis Obispo

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