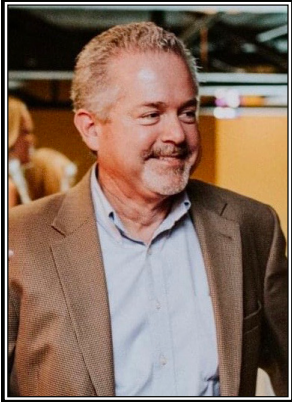


FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk
March 2021



We are well and truly into the season of Lent, this time of reflection and repentance as we prepare for the joyous celebration of Easter.

I don't know about you, but I feel like there has been so much deprivation and loss this past year that it's hard to get in the spirit of Lent. Maybe you feel the same? I'm trusting that God understands those feelings—that God is aware of our hearts and cares about what weighs on us. We don't always get the answers we want, but that should never prevent us from lifting our lives to God in prayer.

One way to do that is to join in our Lent Challenge of saying the Lord's Prayer five times each day. Jesus gave that prayer to his disciples as a model for how we enter into meaningful dialogue with our creator, and I invite you to this practice of dipping in and out of the prayer multiple times each day.

It's easy to dismiss this repetition of words, but I believe the Lord's Prayer has a special place in our habits and practices as disciples of Jesus. It enters our lives whether we're happy or sad—encouraged or feeling down—it finds us no matter where we are in our own rhythms. The words of the prayer might be the same each time, but we're different every time we say it. That's one way to enter into the Lenten season.

Another is to dive into our journey through the Psalms of Lament. I've been saying on Sundays that faithful lament is when we ask "why?" and hold on to our hope even if we don't get an answer. Lament is our language of questioning and even complaining, but it also connects us to the suffering of others. In other words, we read the Psalms of Lament even in the good times, because they give us the capacity to care as God cares, to grieve as God grieves, and even to love as God loves.

So much of our Lent conversation is about what we give up, but I hope you can also see this time as a season of blessing and richness. In any case, like most of the life of discipleship, it's not really about us anyway. It's about how we renew our experience of God in our own lives and how we reach out in love to others. On the first Sunday of Lent, I read these lines from John Chrysostom, a Christian thinker at the end of the 4th century:

*No act of virtue can be great if it is not followed by advantage for others.
So, no matter how much time you spend fasting, no matter how much you sleep on a hard floor and
eat ashes and sigh continually, if you do no good to others, you do nothing great*

Let me encourage you, as you say the Lord's Prayer and as you read through these Psalms of Lament—let me encourage you to listen for ways that you can do good for others. That's really the mark of what we believe. I hope to hear some great stories from you as we move through this time.

With Blessings,

Pastor John

CHILDREN'S ED

We are staying in touch in fun ways. Porch drops, snail mail, art projects, etc. We are busy planning for future programs and are anxious to know which format we can choose. Watch for upcoming events and what those events might look like.

The kids received a fun porch drop for Valentine's Day and a bag full of Lent materials. Lots of activities and ideas for things to do as a family while at home. We are thankful for those who can help us deliver items to our Kids and Youth--Delaney, Kaitlin, Ian, Sierra, Jason, and Jen.

We hope you enjoy the Stations of the Cross Virtual Art Project. If you have not had a chance to watch it, you can find it on First Presbyterian Church SLO's YouTube channel.

We are enjoying staying connected in new ways and appreciate all the support and blessings we continue to receive.

Be safe and wear your mask.



"Dear Jen and Christian Ed, just wanted you to know how much we enjoy finding your surprises by our front door. It's so kind and imaginative and your efforts are appreciated! -Patricia "



If you would like to see the Virtual Stations of the Cross you can find it on First Presbyterian Church San Luis Obispo's YouTube channel - February 17 - Ash Wednesday Service - Enjoy!

YOUTH

Youth Group is going well, and we continue to keep in touch and stay safe through Zoom and Socially Distant activities. Sometimes it is just nice to see someone's face. We have been extremely careful and are following all Safety Guidelines. The Youth are very responsible and understand the need to do what the COVID guidelines require. We were able to have a "Friend-dentine" Party with a small group. We appreciate all the Youth and their families for hanging in there. Plans are being made even though we can't really set dates. Watch for upcoming opportunities.

For our lessons, we are following the Bible in Community themes. The Youth are continuing to enjoy Saturday afternoon on-line game time where they work together to do whatever it is that they have been challenged with or build whatever they are building. We are thankful to Ian who spends this time with them.

The Youth received a Valentines Porch Drop surprise as well as a bag full of Lent materials. If anyone needs assistance with something and one of our Youth can help, let Jen know. They are happy to be of assistance if possible.

Thank you for your continued support. We really appreciate it! Check out the Stations of the Cross Virtual Art Project. You can find it on the First Presbyterian SLO's YouTube channel. Take care and wear your mask!



FRONT PORCH

Front Porch is living life together--apart! While students are still not allowed inside Front Porch, there are lots of happenings. A sample week schedule follows of how Front Porch continues to minister to students during this Covid time.

Tuesday 10 a.m. Movement Morning with Hailey.
Zoom in for an Indie
Pop Pilates routine.

Or: Morning of writing with Paul and Hailey.
Get together for journaling, writing a poem,
or working on a term paper.
Optional sharing at the end.

Wednesday 4-5 p.m. Free meal for pick-up or delivery
(25 bags distributed)
6 p.m. Porch Night via Zoom

Thursday 3-5 p.m. Free grocery bags for students,
in collaboration with Cal Poly food pantry.

Friday 7 p.m. Movie Night outside of
Front Porch

Sunday 9:45 a.m. Sunday Morning Worship - live

Coffee continues to be served daily outside in a safe and distanced way. The staff continue to meet virtually or safely with students for friendship and counseling.

Your continued support for Front Porch allows this vital ministry to thrive. For more information, check out the Facebook for Front Porch or the Front Porch Instagram page.

Susan Updegrove
Chair, Front Porch Board

BOOK BROWSERS

Book Browsers is starting our 2021 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.

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.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

Mary Ruth Mach – March 6

Elaine Townsend – March 16

Shirley Keif – March 21

Happy Birthday to all others with March birthdays.

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

by Gloria DeKleine

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,

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 vaccine providers in our community,

For teachers and students as they struggle with distance learning,

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 family, especially Stewart and Diane, as well as friends of **Starr Jenkins** who passed away in February,

For those of our church family in the process of moving out of the area,

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 Gloria DeKleine at gdeklein@calpoly.edu.

God bless us all, Gloria DeKleine

GREEN PASTURES

"BE A LIGHT TO THE WORLD"

A GREEN LIGHT THAT IS.

The Green Pastures ministry at our Church has recently had several staff move or otherwise be unable to serve. When the Church campus is able to reopen after COVID, Green Pastures will begin seeing clients, interviewing 4-8 clients and providing assistance in the form of advice and small grants. There is a need for 4 new staff. Staff are trained and work with an experienced member for 3-4 hours on one Wednesday a month. This is a truly rewarding way to work with and contribute to our community.

For information, contact Ben Parker at 805-540-1901 or sloparker.ben@gmail.com.

PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

A TIMELY BOOK STUDY COMING UP IN APRIL

In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will." He wrote this from jail in response to an open letter written by eight white Birmingham, Alabama, clergymen who were opposed to the civil rights demonstrations.

Can someone be both a good person and a racist? Christian author Kelly Connelly addresses this paradox in her book *GOOD WHITE RACIST? Confronting Your Role in Racial Injustice*. This April the Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee will lead a study of this timely book. Join us as we read, discuss, and strive as Christians to become not a stumbling block to freedom, but a passionate ally in the pursuit of justice.

The book study will be on Zoom, Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m., beginning the first Wednesday after Easter, April 7. (The Bible Study classes led by Pastor John will not be held during these weeks.) If you wish to participate in the book study or have questions, please contact Karen Wiles at kjwiles324@gmail.com or 805-781-0922.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR AGF GIFT

Brooks and Cherie Smith received a phone call from a Session member of Memorial Presbyterian Church in Mobile, Alabama, thanking our congregation for the generous gift of \$3,745 raised for their church at the Alternative Gift Fair. He told Brooks that their congregation was very appreciative of the gift and would use it to repair the damage of the two hurricanes. He thought it was very kind of us to find them from so far away (thanks, Eugenia!) and that they were included in our Alternative way of celebrating Christmas. They offered their blessings to our congregation and hoped to have further communication with us.

YOU CAN STILL GET YOUR YARD SIGN

Do you have your yard sign yet? Or do you need a new clean fresh sign? We still have quite a few yard signs available. If you want one, please contact Judi Davies at (805) 704-5753.



PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Personnel Reports! Your Personnel Committee doesn't get to toot its horn too often, but it wants to blast loudly as to how fortunate we all here at First Presbyterian Church to have such devoted, hardworking staff of employees. They can leap tall buildings (not really); delay tape programs; broadcast live; teach; minister; create post-production workings; produce mountains of information; send/provide messages, organize, create and deliver meaningful sermons and bible studies; lead; and keep our facilities operating. Those serving us at FPCSLO are absolutely wonderful professionals. These professionals include the following: Rev. John D'Elia, Interim Pastor; Jenifer Rabenaldt, Director of Christian Education/Office Manager; Kenneth Hand, Administrative Assistance; Scott Glysson, Director of Music; Andrew Vigil, Worship Tech and Facilities Tech; Ian Rabenaldt, Worship Tech; and Susan Layous, Bookkeeper.

We are all so grateful for your continued service! Thank you!

FROM THE DEACONS

DEDICATIONS: A WAY TO FILL OUR CHURCH "EASTER BASKET" WITH SUPPORT, HONOR AND BLESSINGS



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 plants beautify our sanctuary on Easter and then are delivered to the homebound, ill, bereaved or new members to let them know we hold them in our hearts.

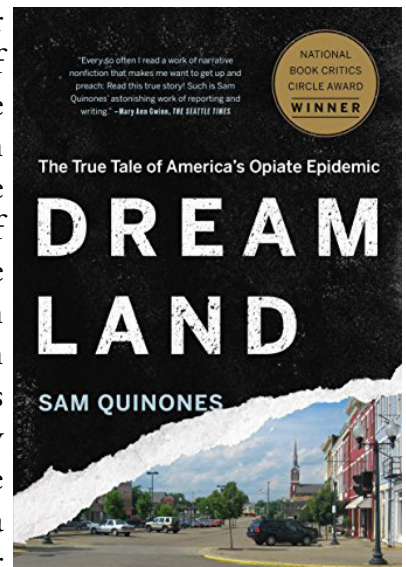
Each loving dedication can be made for a suggested \$10 donation to the Deacons' "LILY Fund." Your loving dedication will be printed in the Easter Sunday bulletin.

Watch for announcements in the Weekly Peak and in your snail mail for how to participate. In the meantime, consider supporting the Deacons' ministry that does so much for so many in our church family. Call Kathy Wolff for details at 805-782-9790 or email dkwolff@charter.net.

LIBRARY REVIEW

Dreamland by Sam Quinones has been added to the library and is available for borrowing

This book weaves together two classic tales of capitalism run amok whose unintentional collision has been catastrophic. The unfettered prescribing of pain medications during the 1990s reached its peak in Purdue Pharma's campaign to market OxyContin, its new, expensive--extremely addictive--miracle painkiller. Meanwhile, a massive influx of black tar heroin--cheap, potent, and originating from one small county on Mexico's west coast, independent of any drug cartel--assaulted small town and mid-sized cities across the country, driven by a brilliant, almost unbeatable marketing and distribution system. Together these phenomena continue to lay waste to communities from Tennessee to Oregon, Indiana to New Mexico. Introducing a memorable cast of characters--pharma pioneers, young Mexican entrepreneurs, narcotics investigators, survivors, and parents--Quinones shows how these tales fit together. Dreamland is a revelatory account of the corrosive threat facing America and its heartland.



Palm Sunday

Hidden Message Word Search

Find the words on the list that are hidden in the puzzle and circle them. The words can be right to left, up and down. Hidden between, or touching those words, are six more hidden words. Circle those six words in a different color and write them in the correct order at the bottom of the page to unscramble the hidden message.

- BRANCHES
- COLT
- DISCIPLES
- DONKEY
- JERUSALEM
- KING
- MOUNT
- NAZARETH
- OLIVES
- PALM

N	I	J	E	R	U	S	A	L	E	M	R	E
O	K	O	M	A	H	O	S	A	N	N	A	R
M	R	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	E	S	L	I
U	T	P	R	A	E	S	O	F	K	I	N	G
D	I	B	R	A	N	C	H	E	S	L	U	P
D	U	E	T	H	E	O	T	O	V	E	N	I
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N	D	O	S	O	N	T	M	A	L	I	Q	U
K	A	N	A	Z	A	R	E	T	H	Q	U	I
E	V	A	T	N	I	S	S	I	S	M	O	D
Y	I	M	E	U	M	I	P	S	U	S	T	R
M	D	L	U	M	S	A	N	D	I	T	P	R
S	P	A	L	M	S	N	U	L	L	U	M	Q
S	E	N	D	R	E	F	E	U	G	I	A	M

Hidden Message:



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