

**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk
March 2022

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, even during Lent.

During this season I will be preaching through a series called “Cross-Shaped People, Cross-Shaped Church,” where we'll reflect on Christ's sacrifice, and what it means for us today. 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, and designed to help us align our hearts to Jesus using the words he taught us to pray.

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.

Welcome to Lent.

With Blessings,

Pastor John

CHILDREN'S ED

Welcome to March! We are cautiously and slowly figuring out how to get our programs up and running. We are keeping our options open and will go with whatever we are mandated to do. Our kids and families have been amazing through it all, and we really appreciate the continued support we receive. It has been a long two years and we are ready to return to what we do best.

The kids are learning about worship and what that means—the how and why we worship. They have also met Calvin the Church Mouse and he is extremely glad to be out of hibernation. He is a little shy and likes to hide from the kids. We enjoy finding him each week and look forward to what he teaches us each week about First Pres SLO.

We look forward to a the time when we can share with you what we have learned. Thank you for your continued support! Stay tuned for information about upcoming activities as they are allowed to occur.

Blessings to you all,
The Children's Ed. Crew,
Jen, Delaney, Jenny Bella, Cole, and Sarah Jane



YOUTH

The continuation of the pandemic has caused delays and has challenged the youth to stay connected in the new year. Thankfully, the gift of technology has continued to be a blessing; and our Youth are so dedicated, faithful, and attentive. Technology has helped us stay connected and spiritually active throughout the pandemic and its many variants. We are looking forward to the year ahead and hope that it is a productive and healing transition out of a bleak and troubling phase for so many. If conditions continue to improve, the Youth are hoping to go on a retreat to Mount Herman over the summer. In the meantime, we will stay steadfast and optimistic and will continue to bring a vibrant energy to First Pres!

-Sarah Jane



FRONT PORCH

Front Porch celebrated an in-person Open Mike Night last month, which brought together students who stepped up to share their musical and poetic talents. Fun was had by all! It is so important for students to have a place to share their passions and talents with friends and other students and members of the community. After all, school is not just academics! This is another example of how Front Porch meets students where they are and celebrates them for who they are—living out “being Jesus” to each other.

Front Porch would not be there if not for the generous support of people like you who care about the support and nurturing of college students. Thank you for your continued support. If you would like to visit, contact Joel Drenckpohl at joel@frontporchslo.org to set up a time to visit.

Susan Updegrove
Front Porch Board

ENDOWMENT FUND CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

2022 ENDOWMENT ALLOTMENT

Our Church's ENDOWMENT FUND grew better than the economy during 2021, reaching a value of \$838,381. The growth rate was in the range of 10 percent meaning, at the end of 2021, \$74,826 was added to the value.

Based on this healthy annual growth the Endowment Committee recommended and Session has approved a 4.5 percent allotment, or \$34,237 to help fund FPC missions and church expenses.

The 2022 allotment provides over \$5,500 to pay for church operations with the balance adding additional revenue to Missions, Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Worship & Music, and Building & Property Maintenance.

A huge THANK YOU is again offered to the past and present extra generous members who have donated the gifts which built the FPCSLO endowment. Have you included this church in your Estate plans?

IS YOUR WILL OR TRUST UP TO DATE?

Has your marital status changed? Have there been changes to your family or business life? If yes, have you reviewed and updated your estate plan? Here we offer a cautionary tale illustrating how an out-of-date will can lead to unintended consequences. Jimmy W. remarried but didn't change his will, retirement accounts, or life insurance beneficiaries. When he unexpectedly died his ex and her family became the recipients of his estate, none of which went to his current widow. Whether this could happen to you is only one reason to update your estate plan. Such documents do subtly get out of date. Life is uncertain. Take care now!

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 haven't 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.

BUDGET & FINANCE

INTRODUCING VANCO MOBILE

The Presbyterian Foundation has announced the release of the **Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement** app for E-Giving to First Presbyterian Church San Luis Obispo.



If you have been using the *GivePlus* app, it is being replaced by the new app called Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement. The last day of operation for the *GivePlus* app was January 31, 2022.

The new Vanco Mobile app is available for your use now! Download it from the Play Store or the App Store and sign up.

The Budget and Finance Committee encourages all members and friends of our church to install and have the app ready whenever the need arises.

If you have a recurring gift set up in the GivePlus app, it will continue to be sent to the church or ministry.

Please reach out to us with any questions. We know that changes like these can be confusing, and we are here to help you. Please contact the Church Treasurer or email or call the Presbyterian Foundation Online Services team at onlineservices@presbyterianfoundation.org or 844-299-4011.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

- March 6 - Mary Ruth Mach
- March 8 - Marilyn Sparks – turns 85 this year
- March 16 - Elaine Townsend
- March 17 - Tom Sparks – turns 85 this year
- March 21 - Shirley Keif

To everyone else with a March birthday. Our church records may be incomplete. If we have overlooked someone, please contact the church office.

BOOK BROWSERS

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

- 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;

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, Sarah Jane Scott**, and others as they work with our children and youth;

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

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

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;

And, 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

40 PRADO DINNER

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO SERVE – LITERALLY!

One of the outreach missions of the church is to prepare and serve dinner to the residents at 40 Prado Homeless Service Center in San Luis Obispo on the fourth Saturday of each month. We have been fortunate to have a dedicated group of host servers for a number of years; now we are in need of a few more hosts.

We would also like to establish a dedicated core of congregants who will commit to preparing a dish for the meal several times a year.

40 Prado host tasks: There are typically three to four coordinators that work together to cover hosting of the twelve meals we provide at the shelter. In pre-COVID times the typical tasks of a host coordinator are shown below:

- On the third Sunday of the month between services solicit sign-ups of volunteers to make or bring casserole, vegetable, salad, dessert and milk as well as a total of four servers.

- On the Friday before the fourth Saturday send a reminder (email or phone) to the volunteers to help them recall their contribution to the meal.

- On or before the afternoon of the fourth Saturday collect the four aprons, plates, cups, and napkins for the dinner from the church.

- On the fourth Saturday arrive at 40 Prado Homeless Services Center by 4:15 pm to receive meal contributions from church members who will deliver the components by 4:30 pm. Serve as a host along with your other servers. The meal will last until a little after 6pm.

- After the meal collect the aprons and remaining plates, cups and napkins. No clean up at 40 Prado is required.

- Work with Pamalee Brady and Steve Walker to select three to four months when you would like to host.

- Notify Pamalee Brady of the shortage of any serving supplies.

- Experience the sincere thankfulness of the clients receiving dinner at the shelter and know the joy of serving!

40 Prado dedicated food preparers: Would you commit to preparing a meal component 4 times a year in the months of your choosing? It would be a great help to the hosts if we could rely on committed individuals each month to make a component of the 40 Prado meal. These components typically include a pasta and meat based casserole, green beans, green salad, cookies/brownies and milk. Such a commitment would also help to engage more members in this local mission of our church.

Please contact Pamalee Brady (pleebrady@gmail.com or 7832520) if you have an interest in serving in this way!

EASTER FLOWERS

A WAY TO FILL OUR CHURCH WITH BLESSINGS OF BEAUTY, HONOR, AND SUPPORT

**DEADLINE FOR DEDICATIONS:
FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2022**

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, the ill, the bereaved, and 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' "Easter Flower" fund. Your personal dedication will be printed in the Easter Sunday bulletin, April 17.

Like the flowers and dedications offered at Christmas, we also want to beautify our sanctuary on Easter morning. Then, it is so special on Monday morning to take the blessing of these flowering plants to those in need of some extra tender, loving care. We have more than 60 people in our church who will appreciate being remembered with a plant this Easter!

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 to whom you are honoring or memorializing. There will also be Deacons available to accept your donation and dedication in person on Sundays after church on March 20, 27, and April 3.

The Deacons thank you heartily for your gifts.



Suggested donation: \$10 -- Your donation supports the Deacons' Easter and Christmas Flower Fund. (It is NOT for a purchase of a plant to take home.) The plants are then delivered on Monday by church members 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 *Easter and Christmas Flowers* and enter amount. (Don't forget to sign in.) 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 FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2022. All dedications will be printed in the Easter Sunday Morning bulletin.

MISSIONS

The Bible has extensive passages referring to immigrants and refugees.

Your Missions Committee has become involved in new local / international mission.

The unrest in Afghanistan has had a large toll on many Afghans. It is expected that more than 65,000 Afghans will be welcomed across the United States through the Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) program, set up through the U.S. government. Many of the Afghans who will be resettled in the U.S. worked directly with the United States on its mission in Afghanistan, including across military, diplomatic, and development efforts, or is a family member of someone who did. Thousands more of this group worked as journalists, human rights activists, or humanitarian workers and had careers that put them at risk, which makes them eligible for visas.

Christian World Services is one of the organizations helping with the resettlement program. A local group of organizations and individuals, “SLO4Home,” is working through CWS to spearhead the resettlement process in San Luis Obispo county and to emphasize four values to Afghan refugees that may be resettled in our area—Family, Community, Safety, and Prosperity.

“SLO4Home” will be supporting these refugees by connecting them with safe and appropriate housing, ensuring food supplies and seasonal clothing are provided, connecting refugees with healthcare and public benefits, helping parents enroll children in school, offering cultural orientation, and providing limited financial assistance.

“SLO4Home” is working to receive the first refugee families this spring.

These people are refugees because of the assistance they provided to the American people in the past. We are working to help them become established in their new home here in the San Luis Obispo area. There is a significant need for funding donations for this program to meet the projected needs of the resettlement process.

“SLO4Home” has developed a WEB page where you can learn more about the refugee resettlement process and can donate directly to “SLO4Home.”

Donations can also be made by mail to:

SLO4Home, Inc.

P.O. Box 1446

San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Questions about “SLO4HOME” and our churches involvement in the Afghan refugee resettlement process can also be answered by Missions Committee member Ben Parker.

FROM THE D.C.E.

The Lord God has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
That I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.
Morning by morning he awakens -
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

Isaiah 50:4

I just returned from Chicago where I attended and participated in the Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators (APCE) annual event. After two years plus of not really being around people, it was quite the adventure. I am thankful that I finally made the decision to go, and for all the support I received.

Following are some of the highlights ...

We were encouraged to memorize the above passage and say it every day. We had an abundance of excellent speakers who encouraged us to follow God’s call in new and creative ways. And also, to take a deep breath and realize “rest” can be just as important as the “oh so busy times.” People are weary and they deserve a “word” from us. The “us” refers to Christian Educators who God has called to be and to do. It is an educator’s job to help God’s people see who they are and whose they are. We are all actors in this story—called by God to do the “love” thing. If we want our churches to live, our churches need to love. That sounds so simple and yet we tend to over complicate what we are truly called to do. What if we regress to the foundational love story? What if we focus on the meaning of the love story? Our “faithing” should and can be fierce, brave, and risky. What if we risk our soul in worship? Come to worship and put God first—not because it is “time” to worship. Real worship puts God first—not the “committee.” What if we remember that God will never

leave us; God will always love us. What if we realize that help and hope are the same? “The Lord hoped me to do better.” There are two things we actually have control over—our hope and our attitude. I heard so many thought-provoking speakers, but I think perhaps my favorite things that make you go hmmmmmm, “God is God and we are not.” “In God’s image we are made; let us not return the favor.” And “Lord, I know you won’t give me anything I can’t handle. I just wish you didn’t trust me so much.”

We were challenged to figure out, what is the tongue of a teacher? What word(s) has God given us to share? I am still working on that one. One thing I do know is that we need to empower our “circles” to do better. I hear a lot of talk that people fear we are losing the next generation. I dare to argue that as long as the “circle” of Christian Education is alive and well, we will not lose any generation. Something happens when we speak it—the love story, the hope, and even the risk—it matters. If we continue to love—even when it hurts—we can do this thing called “faithing.” What if we substitute the word risk with faith? Faith walks the talk. Faith is a good word for this time. Faith is not foolish. You see where I’m going... maybe “faith” is my word? What I am certain about is that when there is trust, we can breathe. When there is Grace, we can love. Probably my favorite suggestion came from Rev. Dr. Jacque Lewis. She told a story about sitting with her Grandma in Church and when they participated in communion, her Grandma guided her by whispering in her ear, “This bread means ... God will always love you;” “This cup means ... God will never leave you.” What a beautiful thing to do and say. What a simple way to plant the seed.

On a personal note—I enjoyed the down time, time with my friends in Christ, snow and wind, safe travel, and really good food. Thank you for your continued support and for understanding how important Christian Education is—for all ages. Thank you for allowing me to live out my call from God. I am excited about what the future holds—even if it’s hard. God has given me the strength, faith, hope, and even the tongue to do this “faithing” thing. Blessings to you all,

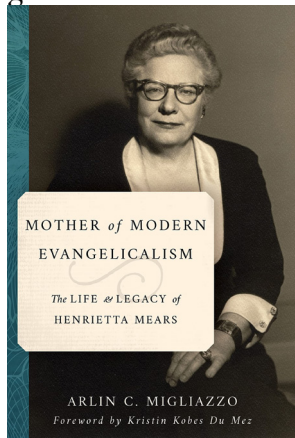
Jen Rabenaldt

P.S. Fun fact - APCE now stands for—The Association of Partners in Christian Education.

LIBRARY REVIEW

Mother of Modern Evangelicalism: The Life and Legacy of Henrietta Mears by Arlin C. Migliazzo has been added to the library and is available for borrowing. It is located on the book cart.

This book is the first comprehensive biography of Henrietta Mears who was arguably the single most influential woman in the shaping of modern evangelicalism.The author has assembled a detailed portrait



of her life and legacy, including the way she helped steer conservative theology between fundamentalism and liberal modernism with her relentless focus on the Christian life as an act of consecrated service....While she never technically delivered a Sunday morning message from the pulpit and refused to be called a preacher, Henrietta Mears's life stands here as a sermon about graceful leadership and faithful engagement with the world.

Name: _____

ON THE ROAD TO EASTER WORD SEARCH



Ash

Holy Week

Palm Branch

Wednesday

Holy Thursday

Forty Days

Sacrifice

Good Friday

Jesus

Almsgiving

Holy Saturday

Passover

Prayer

Easter

Foot Washing

Fasting

Palm Sunday

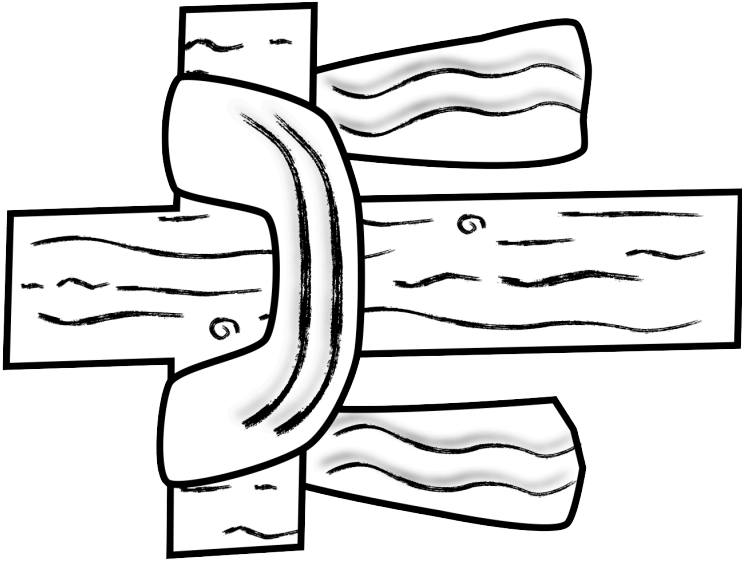
Resurrection

Lent

Purple

Love





Find all ten words:

- Jesus
- Lent
- Ash
- Wednesday
- Dust
- Prayer
- Alms
- Fasting
- Sacrifice
- Purple

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

Unscramble these Lenten Words

TRYFO YASD _____

HSESA _____

NLTE _____

TISFGNA _____

One thing I can do during Lent to
bring me closer to God...



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