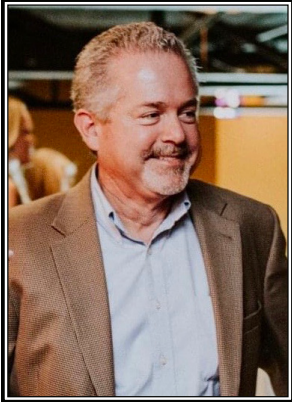


**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk
May 2021



We continue to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter! The church year is generous on this one—we get 50 days to talk about Easter before we get to Pentecost later this month. The empty tomb is a persistent and even stubborn reminder of God’s power and love for us. Death doesn’t get the last word in any of our lives, even when things feel hopeless.

The Easter miracle is why I’ve been focusing on the qualities of Christ in my message series. We don’t just remember that event in the past—we live differently because of it. But how? As I’ve been saying each Sunday, Ephesians 5:1-2 calls us to see Christ as our model as we try to be imitators of God. But we don’t emulate Jesus because we’re afraid of God. We do it as God’s dearly loved children.

Christ has multiple roles and identities in the New Testament. On our first Sunday we talked about Christ as creator, and what that means for us as we breathe our own lifegiving creativity into the dead places around us. But Christ was also a prophet, a priest, a king, and in the end, a sacrifice. We are called to live into our own versions of all of those roles, not out of fear, but as children of God ourselves—dearly loved children.

We’re not on our own as we do this. Another name for the church is the Body of Christ, and as we become more like Christ individually it will strengthen this church’s witness to who Jesus is and what he promises for the community around us.

That’s pretty amazing when you think about it, right?

In the midst of this journey through the ways we model our lives after Christ’s, we’ll celebrate Pentecost. It’s in the gift of the Holy Spirit that the power of God moves in us and through us—where we are empowered to be the disciples and the church that God made us to be.

That’s good news for us as First Pres SLO, and it’s good for the community around us that needs a glimpse of Jesus the Messiah that only we can offer. Each church is unique, and I believe there is a distinctive witness to Jesus that is ours to live and to share.

As we do the work of preparing to reopen for public worship and face-to-face interaction with our city, I invite you to focus on how you can add your life to our collective reflection of Christ. In the end, that’s what we’re about—it’s who we’re meant to be. At Pentecost we’ll be reminded of the ways the Spirit empowers us to be the church. Our job will be to open our lives and allow the Spirit to do its work.

It’s going to be a great season here at First Pres! Join me in prayer as we seek God’s direction and guidance for how we can grow into the best version of this special church. I can’t wait to see what God will do through us.

Pastor John

CHILDREN'S ED

We are busy planning and looking forward to the "all clear." Once leadership decides which direction we are going to take we will fill you in. We are hoping to have some limited number, follow all guidelines, events this summer. Stay tuned!

The kids had fun with their Holy Week Porch Drops. We are still enjoying pictures of their activities in progress and done.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support - especially as we begin the process of reimagining the future of our programs.

If anyone is interested in volunteering contact Jen. We are fairly certain there will be some projects coming up.

YOUTH

The Youth have been enjoying safely being together. We look forward to the time when we can invite friends to join us. For now we are a small but mighty group. The Youth are preparing for Youth Sunday which is May 9. Mark your calendar and join us.

We continue to look for things we can do to "help out". Let Jen know if you have any projects we can participate in under the current guidelines. We continue to follow the Bible in Community Scriptures for our lessons.

Pool Noodles and Giant Jenga are the current go to for activities. Keeping it simple and entertaining. If anyone is interested in bringing a meal let Jen know.

We are currently meeting on Sundays from 5:00pm to 6:30pm and sharing a meal is part of our time together. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

BOOK BROWSERS

Book Browsers will meet in Zoom meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. Here is the final book on our list.

May *Water from My Heart* by Charles Martin

If you have 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 May:

Jean Honeyman – May 1

Gene Gillson – May 4

Luella Warlentin – May 13

Heulan Brown - May 25

Dorie Larson – May 28

Ray McKelvey – May 29

Carolyn Dickey – May 30

Happy Birthday to all others with May 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 -especially in deciding when to gather for in-person worship,

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

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

For the family and friends of **Ralph Nunley** who passed away in March,

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 Gloria DeKleine at gdeklein@calpoly.edu.

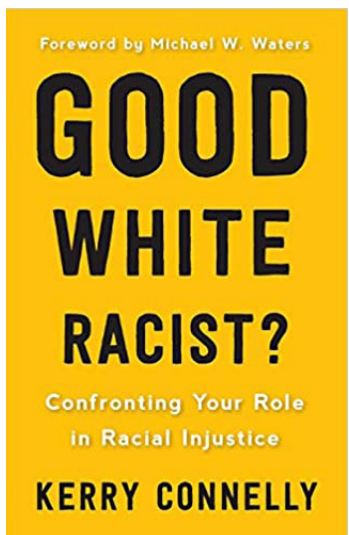
God bless us all, Gloria DeKleine

LIBRARY REVIEW

The book, *Good White Racist?: Confronting Your Role in Racial Injustice* written by Kerry Connelly been donated to the library by Karen Wiles. It is located on the book cart and is available for borrowing.

In April thirty-nine people read, studied, and discussed the book *Good White Racist?: Confronting Your Role in Racial Injustice*. In this important book, author Kerry Connelly exposes the ways white people participate in, benefit from, and unknowingly perpetuate racism—despite their best “good person” intentions. *Good White Racist?* unpacks the systems that maintain the status quo, keep white people comfortable and complicit, and perpetuate racism in the United States and elsewhere. Combining scholarly research with her trademark New Jersey snark, Connelly shows us that even though it may not be our fault or choice to participate in a racist system, we all do, and it’s our responsibility to do something about it.

There is now a copy of this book in the library. (Review by Karen Wiles)



ENDOWMENT CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

OUR ENDOWMENT FUND CONTINUES TO HAVE AN SOUND RESERVE

The First Presbyterian Church San Luis Obispo Endowment Fund continues to hold a healthy reserve, to provide future distributions and counter the erosion of inflation.

The Endowment reserve is greater than \$230,000. The reserve is real growth, showing fund increase without counting added gifts or the approximately \$300,000 allotted for our church’s benefit.

The original gifts add up to \$461,835 while the total fund value, including all added gifts, at the end of March 2021 was \$758,536.

The above statistics are good news. Following that, at the end of March 2021 the total Fund value actually declined a small amount, about -1.5%, primarily reflecting the annual allotment. This is following strong growth in the 4th quarter 2020. Let’s see what happens during the remaining 3 quarters of 2021.

One new fund was created during the first quarter, the Dorie Larson Green Pastures Endowment, the subject of an article in this space a few months ago, which added \$5,000 of new investment. Also during the first quarter the annual allotment of over \$33,000 was withdrawn.

To those who have donated to our endowment we give thanks. They invested in our church’s future; investments from which the church is benefiting every year as the endowment partially funds programs including missions, worship & music, Christian education, building maintenance, and general operations. The same thanks is given to those among us who have included FPCSLO in their estate plans. All gifts are used as the donors specified.

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: 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 your will: after all my bills are paid, 10% of my estate will go to First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo.

MISSION STUDY

COMMITTEE RECRUITING

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We are in need of volunteers to serve on a special Committee to prepare for the future of First Presbyterian Church. That special Committee is the Mission Study Committee.

A Mission Study is a process that a congregation goes through to discern how God is guiding our Church. It is a strategic document that includes a mission and vision statement and strategic plans with the current state of the congregation and the community.

A Mission Study is required when seeking a new Pastor, and when the previous Study is over 7 years old or to assess the state of health of the congregation.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving on this Committee or have questions, please contact the Church Office
or Tim Smith- tim.margosmith@gmail.com or
Steve Walker- stevend@mail.fresnostate.edu

FROM THE DCE

As we are shifting towards reopening the Church I have been doing a lot of thinking about how we survived this past year plus? Not only did we survive but I think we did it quite well. For me, this is where my spiritual gift of being ornery has come in handy. It's hard for me to hear I can't do something. Especially when I know there are ways we can. That's when the little voice in my head says, "watch me do it twice and take pictures". Sure it takes a lot of "different" planning. And, lots of guidelines to follow that we never had to follow before. The biggest challenge was that we could not be together. Good grief that was hard. But, we picked ourselves up, dusted ourselves off and figured it out. Figured out how to stay connected and continue programs in a whole new way. I found that to be a blessing, a silver lining some might say. We were doing great. Our programs were successful and full of life but, were we stuck in a rut? How long would we have been able to sustain the success of these programs? We quickly figured out that

staying connected was a big deal. Virtually, porch drops, mailings, etc. became our new way to stay connected. Giving people the opportunity to do programs at home, with family.

I think we all learned what we are made of - or not - during this time. I like to think of it as grit. And I have discovered I am full of it - grit that is. Grit drives perseverance and can have a profound impact on our lives. It's the determination to keep going when it would be easy to just give up. It's the will to keep going. Grit gives us the ability to stay on course when things get difficult and seize the opportunity to make the most of "it". I learned I am the kind of ornery gritty person that just sticks with it even when it seems impossible. I also learned that I could never have done the past year plus on my own. Our impulse grit can get us through the first few hurdles but then what. We simply can't sustain our gritty determination for very long on our own. And really, shouldn't even try. This is where our "spiritual grit" kicks in. The strength from outside ourselves to help us face and overcome the challenges before us. God tells us, "I will be with you" and God has been with us. God will give us what we need most just when we need it most.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers. I know this ornery gritty person appreciates it more than you will ever know. I am looking forward to what the future holds - for all of us. And remember, to Love God and then Love People.

Jen

Director of Christian Education/Office Administration

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **We recommend prioritizing life and health of neighbor in all ministry decisions as a Gospel witness.**
2. Concurrent values include creativity (holy experiments), urgency and care in meeting human needs, and attending to diversity and accessibility.
3. Norms of these recommendations include taking seriously the church's role as community leader, and trusting in the resilience of the church.

4. Churches should take a two-step approach to gathering, tracking the following data:

FIRST, watch vaccination rates. When more than 50% of the population has been vaccinated, we can expect that it will begin to have an impact on viral transmission (although "herd immunity" will not likely be fully reached until vaccination rates exceed 75%).

THEN, track COVID cases per 100,000 population and the rates of positive tests. Our safer threshold for gathering is when cases are less than 5 per 100,000 population and positive tests less than 10%. Safest would be even lower.

UNSAFE TO GATHER	MAKE IT SAFER	SAFEST
Vaccination rates <50%	Vaccination rates 50-70+%	Vaccination rates 70-85+%
Viral Transmission ♦ Cases >10/100K ♦ Positive Tests >10%	Viral Transmission ♦ Cases 5-10/100K ♦ Positive Tests <10%	Viral Transmission ♦ Cases <1/100K ♦ Positive Tests <5%

5. **Some of the most important things churches can be doing until it is safer to gather in person is to encourage people to be vaccinated, debunk myths about vaccinations and vaccines, and encourage continued protective behaviors.**
6. **When you begin gathering in physical space again, plan on event modifications, mitigations and protective behaviors until COVID in the community is very low.** Expect these modifications to continue for a significant amount of time, perhaps this calendar year or longer. See full text of this document for information about phased plans, mitigating especially risky behavior, and healthy decision-making.

UNSAFE	MAKE IT SAFER	SAFEST
All at once Unmasked No distancing Full capacity Assembly singing Eating together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Face masks mandatory ♦ Physical distancing ♦ Low-touch environment ♦ Outdoors or increased air exchange ♦ Shortened time of service ♦ Singing by worship leaders only ♦ Focus on sanitizing high-touch surfaces ♦ Sign-in / attendance list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ All of the "make it safer" plus no or minimized singing ♦ Hybrid, phased plan ♦ Wait 1 month+ between phases ♦ Fallback plan for outbreaks ♦ Communication plan ♦ Team responsibility

WORD SEARCH

Search for words that describe the Pentecost from Acts 2.

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

CHRISTIANITY
PENTECOST
HOLY SPIRIT

DISCIPLE
LOVE
CHURCH

PRAYER
HEAVEN
WIND

GOD
REJOICE
ONE ACCORD





Jesus had promised his followers a special helper - the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. Acts 2:1--4



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