

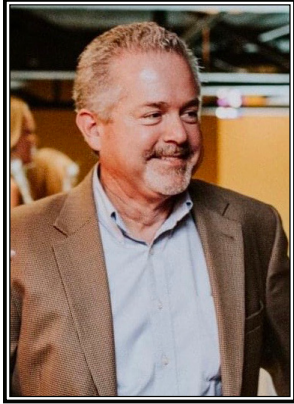


FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

*San Luis Obispo*

# *The Kirk*

July 2020



Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, the one who came and loved and died and rose again, all to demonstrate his love for every single person in his creation. Hold that thought—it's going to matter in a moment.

It is a gift to be back with you. During my time as a temporary interim I came to love this church and the people in it. There are so many wonderful possibilities for serving SLO and the world in Christ's name—there is so much to talk about!

But right now, in this moment, we need to focus on the world around us and to prayerfully consider how we are going to respond as the church of Jesus the Messiah in this place.

In early June my son and I attended a demonstration in downtown SLO, hosted by African-American faculty from Cal Poly and Black Lives Matter. It was an inspiring and difficult event. We heard stories of pain and loss, we heard about the ways justice has been denied for centuries, and we heard the frustration of people who were tired of having to convince their neighbors that their lives had value.

The whole event reminded me of what God teaches us through the prophet Isaiah. In the very first chapter of that amazing book, God says:

Learn to do right; seek justice.

Defend the oppressed.

Take up the cause of the fatherless;

plead the case of the widow. (1.17)

It's time the church and its leaders take this teaching seriously. I want to share a letter I wrote last week. It gets at some of my personal feelings.

My heart is broken these days.

I grew up in a town where I felt safe, where no one attacked or challenged me because of the color of my skin, and where the police were the good guys. But by the time I went to college, and increasingly as each year has passed, I knew that my experience wasn't shared by everyone.

I grew up in a town in Southern California where "Sundown Laws" were enforced, even if they weren't written. Black people could work there, but they better not be caught outdoors after sundown. In 1964, the good people of my hometown voted more than 3 to 1 to repeal a recent state law which made it illegal to discriminate in real estate transactions according to the buyer's race. That law wasn't fully repealed until 1974. It took until 1979 for the first African-American student to graduate from my high school, the same high school that had graduated both of my parents and one of my grandparents.

As I watch and listen to the anguish of my black brothers and sisters as they tell of their experiences growing up in this country, I'm aware that I knew a lot of the details already. That right there is the experiential definition of privilege: it doesn't directly affect me, so I don't really have to think about it very much. It doesn't have to invade my consciousness every single minute. I can leave it alone to think about happier things. I can even grouse about the intense reactions of the victims, because it disturbs my peace and my sense of order.

That's over now.

Today I pledge these things (for now), and they impact my ministry with you:

First, I will work to make sure the issue of racism moves to the center of my expression of the gospel of Jesus Christ. White Christians have been silent for too long about the persistent marginalization of people of color, and sinfully selective in the ways we share the love and acceptance offered to everyone through God's saving work. No gospel is complete if it leaves out any of the people Christ came to redeem.

Second, I will listen not only to the multiple ways racism impacts its victims, but also how it debases and perverts the lives of those who actively support it or passively allow it to continue. The stories of racism in this country are violent and shocking and difficult to hear, and that's precisely why they are necessary. We are broken and diminished when we look the other way, and in any case, it has never been the calling of the church to avoid issues of justice and peace and love.

Unless it is my responsibility to lead, I will choose to defer in public gatherings to speakers who are persons of color, those who understand and have experienced racism first-hand. My role is to support those who are abused directly by words and institutions and systems that have kept them from full participation in this nation's protections and opportunities.

My heart is broken these days, but I believe in a God who mends hearts, challenges minds, and strengthens the resolve of faithful disciples.

I'm counting on that God today. Join me.

Pastor John

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## A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Dear church family,

I have been on a rather long health journey with breast cancer. It started in September of last year just before my ninetieth birthday. With support from my family, friends, and prayer support from my church family, I am finally on the other side. I have had chemo as part of my treatment. Now I have had a mastectomy. The good news is the cancer did not spread to my lymph nodes. The doctor assured me that they removed all of the cancer. Thank you so much for your support and more importantly, your prayer support. The many caring cards, phone calls, flower arrangements, and special gifts. It means so much during low times that people care.

Lou Fogo

## YOUTH

Things have been busy with the Youth this past month! We are continuing to enjoy doing Youth Group on Zoom every Sunday at seven p.m. It has been a joy to catch up and be silly before we start the lesson. We have continued the Youth Group Lesson plan from where we left off in March, kicking it off with lessons on Laziness and Contentment. Attendance has been great!

Our Youth Minecraft Realm (a Videogame with the main goals being teamwork, building, and exploring) is going well, and we are having a regular group of Youth attending. We have expanded to two Minecraft Nights; Wednesday night at 5:00 p.m. and Saturday night at 4:00 p.m. We are focusing on team building activities and problem solving; all the while keeping it fun and creative.

We have also set up a Discord Server (a free app that allows the Youth to group chat) for the Youth so that they can practice fellowship outside of Youth Group and Minecraft Night. This has been quite successful, as the Youth have been posting on it daily.

For both the Minecraft Realm and Youth Discord server, we have received permission from parents/guardians before kids are allowed to join, and both are monitored by myself and Jen.

I also would like to share a fun challenge we did with the Youth, Called Ding Dong Ditch. We challenged the









## A GOODBYE FROM THE CHILDREN'S STAFF

We had to say see you later to Karlyn Tremaine who has worked in our Children's Program for three years. Karlyn graduated from Cal Poly with a BS in Industrial Engineering. We are so proud of her and wish her joy in her new adventures. Karlyn will be working for Boeing in Seattle. She promises she'll come back for a visit soon. Good luck Karlyn - we love you and will miss you.



# CONGREGATION CARE CORNER

Please pray for our church family during this difficult pandemic, especially

For **Pastor John D'Elia** as he serves as our pastor,

For our **Elders** as they lead us during this challenging time,

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 caregivers in our community,

For those people worried about their jobs and businesses,  
For 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,

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.

by Gloria J DeKleine

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

Edward Sibley - July 11

George Mach – July 23

Eva Brown – July 26

Lorna Hudson – July 31

Jean Starkey – July 31

**And to everyone else with a July birthday!**

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

by Gloria J DeKleine

# ENDOWMENT

## CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

### HOW THE CHURCH'S ENDOWMENT FUND BENEFITS FPCSLO

Our Church is at another turning point, similar to many we have faced in the past. We will look back on this time as another maturing event of church history. Taking the long view of the life of our Church, we want to find specific ways to enhance the future of this congregation. How can we build up or preserve Worship, Christian Education, Missions, Music, or our Historic buildings for example? We contribute our time, our talents, and participate in stewardship. Beyond our annual tithes, we can follow the examples of current and late saints by contributing to this Church's ENDOWMENT. It can be as simple as just naming the Church as a beneficiary in our wills, trusts or life insurance policies. Cash gifts are also welcome.

Members blessed with assets we're able to share can create a LASTING LEGACY, which will be a memorial to a dearly beloved or ourselves as well as support our Church in perpetuity. We can extend our stewardship, and accomplish our hopes and goals for the Church during and/or beyond our lifetimes with a gift to the FPC Endowment Fund.

There are various parts of the Endowment to contribute to or a new need can be funded. What counts is not the what or how we bestow our gifts; it is the joy of helping others through this Church's mission and we can be assured we are benefitting FPCSLO's future and that our gifts will be well managed and preserved.

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: Don Green, Jerry Kaml, Bert Townsend, Dorothy Truesdale, Roger Verity, or Virginia Walter (Chair).

You can now donate electronically by credit/debit card or fund transfer from your bank. Use the DONATE button on the church website, [fpcslo.org](http://fpcslo.org) or use this quick response code.



Even a modest gift will make a difference.

## FRONT PORCH

If I had to pick one word to describe how Front Porch responded to the closing of the Cal Poly campus, I would choose “creatively.”

With the whole of spring quarter happening online, the staff strategized about how to keep relationships alive among students scattered throughout the state and country. Daily office hours were held by the staff, so every day students could check in via Zoom to meet with a staff person and other students. Each staff determined the focus of the office hour. It might be a “show and tell” or sharing “one fun thing or something that has happened during sheltering.” Wednesday night meals occurred remotely. A simple menu was published on Monday, and students were encouraged to cook it. There was even a “Cooking with...” time at 5 p.m. on Wednesday before the 6 p.m. group time on Zoom where trivia was played. Students were joined in a group to compete or competed on their own with whoever was sheltering with them. Questions were then sent to each group in chat and answers were emailed back. The week I joined, my team won first place, definitely not due to my contributions! A screen shot of the group was then taken to post on the “Trivial Winners Board” for spring quarter.

The technology used was way beyond my skill set, which is why it is so much fun to hang out with college students and experience what they know and can do! Saturday worship gatherings continued, with a reading or video sent out early in the week to form the basis of discussion on Saturday night. Weekly hikes occurred with each person posting photos of hikes they were taking, and a book club formed. The staff made personal contact with over 120 students, provided one-on-one time with students, and organized an on-line scavenger hunt. Weekly podcasts were also being made available, covering such topics as “The History of Front Porch” and



“The Politics of the Divine.” Even an open mic night was held via Zoom! As restrictions lifted, a farewell dinner was held for graduating seniors living in the area and was served on the street in front of Front Porch.

An unexpected benefit of Zoom activities was the participation of alumni in many activities. What fun to connect again to students and staff that have moved on!

The staff has decided to continue the book club through the summer and have bi-weekly Wednesday night programming.

While this was happening, the Front Porch Board had to deal with the hard reality of a probable decrease in contributions. We worked hard to decrease the budget by 25 percent. The hardest decision was to terminate the donor relations position and say “good-bye” to Kyle Smith. We miss his energetic and positive spirit and ability to be the face of Front Porch to many churches and individuals. Joel took over the primary responsibility for fund raising; and as always, Front Porch welcomes and appreciates the support of this church and its members.

Susan Updegrove  
Front Porch Board

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## PROPERTY REPORT

Things have been jumping around FPCSLO since pandemic shut down in March. Cleaning, staff changes, damage repairs and a re-slurried paved parking lot are just some of the activities around the wonderful Church at the corner of Marsh and Morro.

Currently, Hart Building got a recent face-lift as a result of rain storm damage this Winter. The 92 year old downspout was leaking into the Green Pastures/ SLO Village office space, through the walls and into the room. Inspection in December revealed cascades of rainwater descending into the Hart Building interior wall. Repairs began once everything dried out and a structural engineer inspected the damage. Eric Griffith has been heading up the effort, essentially the General Contractor, with Tim Smith as loyal assistant. Coordinating encroachment permits for scaffolding,

approved plans, contracts with plasterer, painters and installers, things began to fall into place just last week, when it DID rain a little.

The Committee will be submitting insurance claims to aid in the financing of this effort. Once this is over with, the Committee will be initiating a Fund Raising Campaign to address the 33 year old Wilson Hall roof(it leaks) as well as replacing the 33 year old heater and air/conditioner. We are confident we can begin this new property challenge this Fall.

Please consider joining the Property Committee on this new effort!

Gratefully, Eric Griffith and Tim Smith



# PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The Presbyterian Women are hoping to be able to resume our in person meetings soon. Zoom works for now. Here's hoping things will improve before Christmas.

I wanted you to be aware that preparing for our new Bible study gathering in September may need to have an alternate plan. Those who zoom can help by encouraging others to watch the Introduction on line or together using the DVD during your meeting. Mary Blythe now has all the Horizon bible study books and the DVD s for each of the four groups. She currently is on vacation and has gone to their cabin, so we will wait to later to distribute them to the groups or individuals.

If you are looking for some supportive and rewarding reading check the May/June issue of the Horizon Magazine. This edition is full of 'Great' Reads throughout the issue. Materials that reflect on children needs, community care and personal growth.

There is also a wonderful article on "Peace Be With You," with Scripture bases on John 20:19-31. John gives us a deeper personal account of Thomas who reflects the tension between certainty and uncertainty in profound ways. Jesus enters and proclaims "PEACE BE WITH YOU." (29:19b) "Uncertainty is a part of our lives today and there are forces and situations that challenge our trust and faith." Quote from Page 7 of the article.

See the prayer:

Lord, I will trust you, help me to journey beyond the familiar and into the unknown.

Give me faith to leave the old ways and break fresh ground with you.

Christ of The mysteries, can I trust you to be stronger than each storm within me?

I believe You will make a way for me, and provide for me, if I only trust you.

Amen. (The Northumbria Community.)

Just a reminder, we have had very little financial support / offerings since we have not had face to face meetings. Since we want to continue the work and mission support that we have budgeted, I encourage if you if willing and able to to mail a donation to the church and memo it "Presbyterian Women."

I have sent a request to Kayenta for a list of their holiday needs which we will be collecting and will send in September. I also let them know our financial support for their Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners will be a little less this year.

I hope this finds all well and keeping the faith.  
Dorothy Truesdale, PW Moderator

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## LIBRARY REVIEW

As our congregation is doing social distancing and cannot access the Church Library this review lists a few books that might be of interest and are available as ebooks on Amazon's Kindle and Barnes & Noble's Nook or can be ordered online.

**Anne Lamott** (small books)

Small Victories: Spotting Improbable Moments of Grace

Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy

Almost Everything: Notes on Hope

**Anthony Robinson** (Recommended by Pastor John)

Changing the Conversation: A Third Way for Congregations

**Daniel Levitin** (Published 2020)

Successful Aging: A Neuroscientist Explores the Power & Potential of Our Lives

**Scott Peck** ( A classic book well worth rereading)

The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values, and Spiritual Growth

**Kathleen Smith** (Published December 2019)

Everything Isn't Terrible: Conquer Your Insecurities, Interrupt Your Anxiety, and Finally Calm Down

# AN INVITATION

To: First Presbyterian Church members  
From: The Peacemaking and Social Justice  
Committee.

For: An opportunity to deepen our understanding of  
racism and help us to better follow Jesus Christ

We are all aware of the many protests against racism and  
demands for justice that have swept our country and the  
world. Although we have few black persons in SLO, does  
our church have a responsibility to speak for racial justice?

Because we are unsure of the meaning of racism, we are  
seeking a better understanding. We hope you will join us  
to contribute ideas, experiences, informative articles or  
movies.

If you are interested in joining us in this study, please  
contact one of the members of the Peacemaking and  
Social Justice Committee: Karen Wiles, Mary and Harry  
Butler, Art DeKleine, Steve Brown, Judi Davies,  
Jim Nielsen, Jim Seeber, Brooks Smith, Ben Parker.

To help us better understand the issues, we have found the  
Presbyterian ( USA) article, [Dismantling Structural Racism](#),  
and the list of Racial Justice Resources helpful.

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# CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES

Congratulations to the following Graduates. If we  
missed someone - let us know - and we will honor them  
next month.

Anna Mullen - University of Oklahoma  
Marcus Cueto - Long Beach State  
Emily Hillsinger - Cal Poly  
Grace Slocum - Colorado State

Cady Scott - Family Partnership Charter School

Henry Esola - Bishop Peak Elementary

Wishing you all much success in whatever the future  
holds for you.



# FPCSLO KIDS

## THE GOOD NEIGHBOR: BASED ON LUKE 10:25-37

Do you know your neighbors? They can be people next door, down the street, or across town. Jesus told a story about what it means to be a good neighbor, even to people you don't know. In the time of Jesus, the Samaritans and Jews did not like each other at all. Jesus was a Jew, and one day he told this story about a Samaritan and what happened to him.

Wherever Jesus went, people came to listen to his teaching and to ask questions. One day a lawyer came to Jesus with an important question. "Teacher," he said, "the law says that we must love our neighbor the way we love ourselves."

"That's right," Jesus replied.

"Who is my neighbor?" asked the religious teacher.

Jesus answered the question with a story, "One day a traveler was walking down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Suddenly, robbers attacked him and stole all his money. They ran away leaving him lying in a heap on the side of the road. He was badly hurt and needed help.

"After a while, he heard someone coming. It was a priest. *Thank goodness*, the traveler thought, *I'm saved!*

"But the priest was afraid that robbers would hurt him too. He crossed to the other side of the road, looked the other way, and kept on going.

"Later, the injured man heard someone else coming. This time it was a Levite, also a religious leader. Finally, he thought, *Surely this one will stop and help.*

"But the Levite was also afraid of robbers. He crossed to the other side of the road, looked the other way, and hurried by.

"A third time the injured man heard someone coming. This time it was someone coming from Samaria on the way to Jerusalem. *Oh no*, the traveler thought, *It's someone from Samaria. He will never help me.*

"But the Samaritan man did stop. He bandaged the hurt man and lifted him onto his donkey. He took him to an inn. He gave the innkeeper money to look after the traveler until he was well."

Jesus asked, "Who was a neighbor to the traveler attacked by robbers?"

The one who was kind to him; the one who stayed with him and helped him," the lawyer replied.

"Go and be that kind of neighbor," said Jesus

Hear: What does this story teach us about being a neighbor?

See: Choose one of the characters in the story. What do you think that person looked like?

Act: Can you think of someone in your neighborhood who is new and might need a friend? How can you be a good friend to your neighbor?

## The Good Samaritan

When Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself," a man asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told a story. In this parable a man who had a problem was helped by a Samaritan, a man he thought was his enemy.

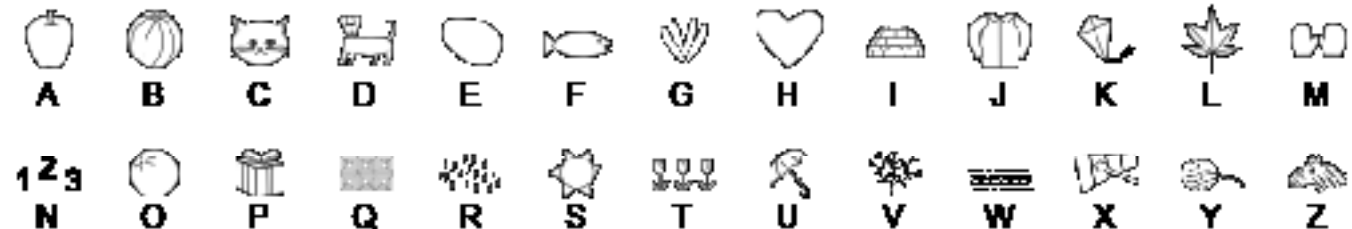
Read each verse, and number the events of the story in the right order.

- |   |            |       |  |
|---|------------|-------|--|
| 1 | Luke 10:30 | _____ | A Samaritan was sorry for the man and stopped to help.                   |
| 2 | Luke 10:31 | _____ | A man was robbed, beaten up, and left by the side of the road.           |
| 3 | Luke 10:32 | _____ | He bandaged the man and put him on his own donkey.                       |
| 4 | Luke 10:33 | _____ | A priest (temple leader) passed by the man and didn't stop to help.      |
| 5 | Luke 10:34 | _____ | He took the man to an inn (hotel) and left money to take care of him.    |
| 6 | Luke 10:35 | _____ | A Levite (temple helper) stopped to look at the man but didn't help him. |

## The Meaning of the Story

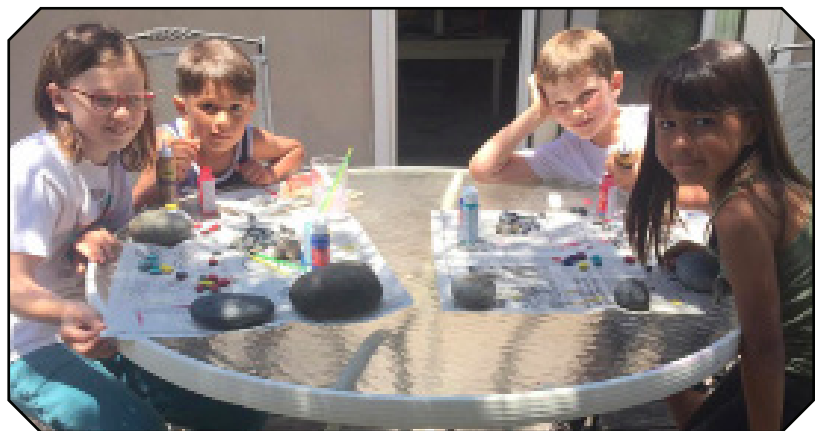
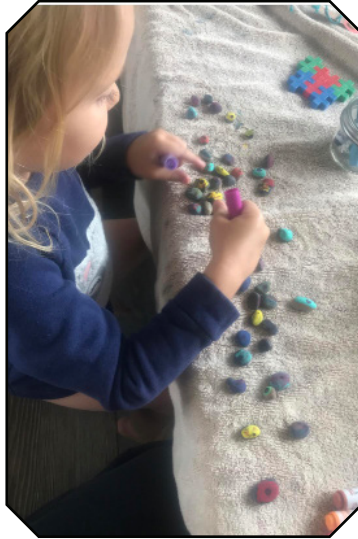


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# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JUNE 2020





**FIRST  
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