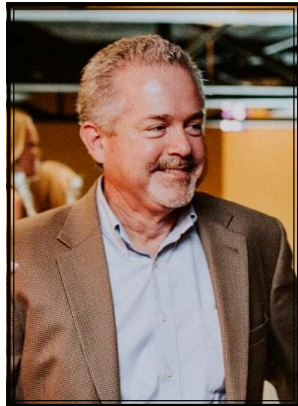


**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk

September 2021



I have a handful of cousins who have served in the Navy. Some served regular enlistments and a few of the others made careers out of it—one retired as a Master Chief, the highest rank for a non-commissioned officer. She has some amazing stories to tell. At family get-togethers they would talk about their experiences—long deployments overseas, occasional dangers, and lots of funny stories.

They all talked about sea legs.

The dictionary defines “sea legs” as “a person's ability to keep their balance and not feel seasick when on board a moving ship”. It takes a while to adjust to the movement of the water and the way it affects everything from a small patrol ship to the largest aircraft carrier. (Interestingly, the same process happens in reverse—after coming ashore it takes a while for the body to realize that the earth isn't moving like the ocean did.)

I wonder if we haven't all experienced something like sea legs over this last year and a half. We closed abruptly and then had to adjust to the unsteady feeling of an empty sanctuary and recorded services. As we got better at the technology we moved to Zoom, which gave us a sense of connectedness, but also highlighted just how much we missed being together. Over the last month or so we reopened with some restrictions, and now we're being vigilant about whether or not the new variant of COVID will close us again.

Anyone else feeling a little unsteady right about now?

Psalm 18 begins with these words:

I love you, Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;

my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,

my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Whatever else might be unsteady in our lives, whether at home, at work or at school, or even at this church—whatever else might be moving and unpredictable, it's good to be reminded that God is our rock, that God's unshakeable nature is something we can trust and lean on in uncertain times. Now we all know that this isn't some magic trick that makes everything better or pain-free. There is a lot of mystery in this journey of faith, and embracing that with faith and trust in God is what we're called to do—who we're called to be—as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Still, it's a comfort to reflect on the Psalmist's words: “The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer.” I think we're going to need that reminder as we look back on this year or more of uncertainty, and as we face the challenges ahead. God can be trusted. God can be leaned on. We're going to do both as we chart out a new course of service and witness in the coming year.

In the meantime we will continue to gather, continue to praise, continue to grow in our faith, and continue to serve (Think: Fellowship, Worship, Discipleship and Mission). Where and how we do church may change, but we will always be the Body of Christ in this community and for God's glory.

Welcome to a new church year. Time to test our sea legs.

CHILDREN'S ED

We are geared up for the new program year and are figuring out the best way to proceed - safely! We are excited to get back into the swing of things. For now, Wednesdays at the Rock will resume on September 1 - we aren't exactly sure what that will look like but we will be following all guidelines and protocols to stay and be safe. We will keep everyone posted as we move forward. Wednesdays at the Rock is open to Nursery through 6th grade children. Age appropriate lessons and activities as planned and music will be available to all.

We plan on opening the Nursery during Worship starting September 5th as long as we continue to worship in person. Our Nursery Staff are vaccinated and we will follow all guidelines and protocols.

For the kids, we will start a new series based on the "Growing In Gods Love" children's bible and curriculum through the PCUSA. We look forward to sharing Gods love for us all through this series and the program year.

Keep us in your prayers as we navigate how and what to do with programming. We have so many things we hope to do but realize God may have other plans for us. We remain faithful and committed to our kids and the kids in our community who have joined us. Please keep them all and our Staff in your prayers. We are dedicated to planting seeds and love watching them grow.

Your support means everything,

The Children's Ed. Committee



YOUTH

As our summer season ends and the school year begins there has been a lot of planning going on. We can't wait until we can safely implement programs and activities. When the time comes - we are ready.

Our small but mighty Youth Group has been amazing through it all. We have a great group of kids and we appreciate your continued support! We are always looking for things to do to help out. If you have things you need help with or projects to be done - let us know. We would love to be of service.

As long as we can safely do so we will continue to meet on Sundays from 5:00 to 6:30. We are currently doing our Bible Study at this time as well. We will start a new series, "Faith Questions" from the PCUSA. We look forward to the time when we can invite friends and participate more not only at Church but within our community. School and extracurricular activities keep our kids busy but they carve out time and space for First Pres SLO. Keep them in your prayers as the new school year starts and they are back on campus.

Thanks for all you do for us,
The Youth Committee



BUDGET & FINANCE CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

Our financial situation as of June indicates a weakening financial health that gives us some concern.

In the month of June 2021, total income was \$27,268 and total expenses were \$39,367. This decreased Total Reserves (our savings account) by \$12,099, leaving a balance of \$83,713 as of June 30, compared to the \$112,099 balance reached in January 2021. In other words, some of our operating expenses for the past five months have been funded out of Total Reserves.

Total giving was less for the past two months, averaging \$30,118 a month, which is less than average monthly giving previously this year. This gives the committee concern that we may not reach our budgeted giving level this year.

Expenses in the worship, education, and congregational life committees have been below plan because of curtailed activities during the pandemic. We anticipate increases in these committees, and perhaps in staffing once we resume in-person worship and education programs.

Session, particularly committee chairs, and staff will monitor spending in order to assure that critical elements of our mission will be fully funded.

Your continued faithful giving will enable FPCSLO to continue and enhance our service to the congregation and the community.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

- September 6 - Jerry Hempenius
- September 11 - Richard Andrews
- September 17 - Judy Barnett
- September 21 - Glenn Carlson
- September 26 - Jerry Kaml (85 this year)
- September 29 - Lou Fogo

And to everyone else with a September birthday! Our church records may be incomplete. If we have overlooked someone, please contact the church office.

Please pray for our church family, especially

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 members of our various church committees as they help us find new ways to worship and interact within this changing COVID situation,

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 our church members, friends & family who are undergoing treatments for various health issues,

For **JoAnne Masten**, family and friends of **Ralph Watson**, who passed away in August,

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 like our wonderful musicians and the technical people who make it possible for live streaming and recording of the services,

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 me at gdekley@calpoly.edu.

God bless us all,
Gloria DeKleine

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE

BINGO IS HERE!

Zoom Bingo will be held on Friday, Sept. 17 at 7p.m. More information coming soon! For questions please contact Pam Rodewald at psrmony@mac.com or by phone (805) 215-2396

Thank you,
Pam Rodewald
Chair of Congregational Life

FRONT PORCH FUNDRAISING DINNER

Remember back to when you started college. Who were you? Think of 3 words to describe your 18 year old self. Were you going away to college/university? What were your hopes and dreams? How were you feeling? Now add to that memory the knowledge that you have just spent the weirdest, most challenging school year of your life - learning virtually and socially isolated much of the time. School work may have suffered, friendships were challenged, you were with your family 24/7 and now you are anticipating moving into a dorm on a campus away from home. Again, what feelings may be stirring around in you? Can you think of three things your adult self would like to share to that 18 year old self?

If one of your pieces of advice is “find a place where you feel at home and can be yourself”, you need to know that Front Porch is just that for incoming college students at Cal Poly and Cuesta. With the invitation of a free cup of coffee and a place to study or just hang out, students are welcomed to meet staff and older students who will help them feel seen and heard and be comfortable in the college setting. Interested in learning more? Consider coming to the Front Porch fundraiser to be held on October 30th at SLO Rock. See attached “save the date” card. To receive an invitation, please contact Susan Updegrave at susan@frontporchslo.org or email Dom Floyd at associate@frontporchslo.org.

Interested in sharing your memories of being a college freshman? I'd love to hear your story. Contact susan at email above.



MISSION STUDY

Our church's Mission Study Committee has been formed and is meeting. The committee consists of Catherine Petty, Virginia Walter, Kay Emmons, Nellie Beecher and Ray McKelvey. This committee along with the session are reviewing our Mission Study of 2013 looking to see what is still true and effective; what has change and where God is guiding us now. We will be asking members of the church for input. Stay tuned. We are on an exciting journey.

Prayerfully, Your Mission Study Committee.

PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING

On World Communion Sunday, October 3, we will celebrate that Christ's peace extends throughout all creation. We celebrate that we are offered what we need to address injustice across the world. Extending the peace of Christ is part of an active, engaged faith—a witness to what it means for us to be the Church, together.

WHAT IS THE PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING?

This offering draws Presbyterians together, and provides education and exposure to those who show us how to do peacemaking well. It allows us to create resources for dealing with conflict and provide nurturing reconciliation, and stand in support of our global sisters and brothers, because the peace of Christ belongs to people everywhere.

WHERE DOES YOUR OFFERING GO?

50% goes to peacemaking efforts around the globe such as helping people process violence and crisis-related trauma in places like Lebanon;

25% goes to Santa Barbara Presbytery for missions such as Front Porch;

25% stays at FPC to support Green Pastures.

Through participation in the Peace & Global Witness Special Offering, we extend Christ's peace throughout our community and our world. Won't you please prayerfully consider giving generously to this once a year, very worthwhile offering for PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS?

May the God of peace give you peace at all times in all ways.
2 Thessalonians 3:16

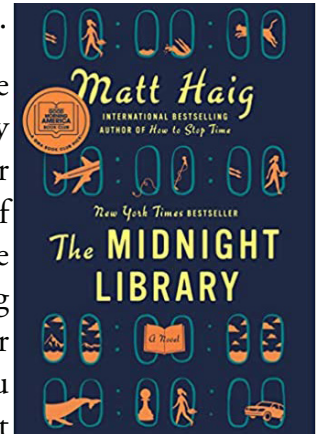
Thank you,
Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee

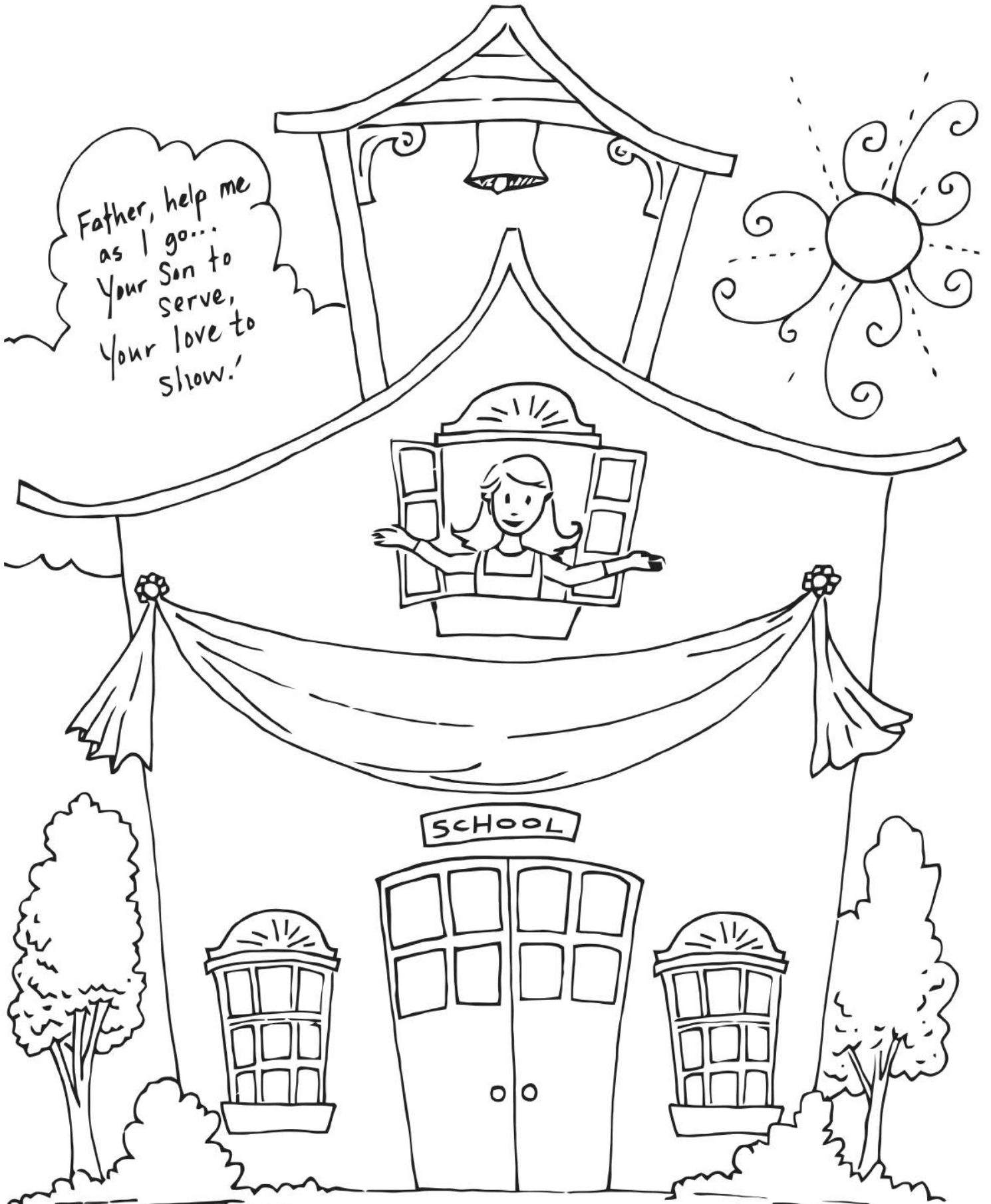
LIBRARY REVIEW

The Midnight Library a fiction book by Matt Haig has been added to the library and is available for borrowing. You can find it on the book cart.

Somewhere out beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better?

In *The Midnight Library* Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. When the death of her cat proves to be the final straw, Nora decides to check out on life, and finds herself at the Midnight Library. "Even death was something Nora couldn't do properly, it seemed." But each book at this library tells the story of a life she could have had. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place. This inventive novel is about regret, the choices we make, and taking the bitter with the sweet. (Review from Amazon)

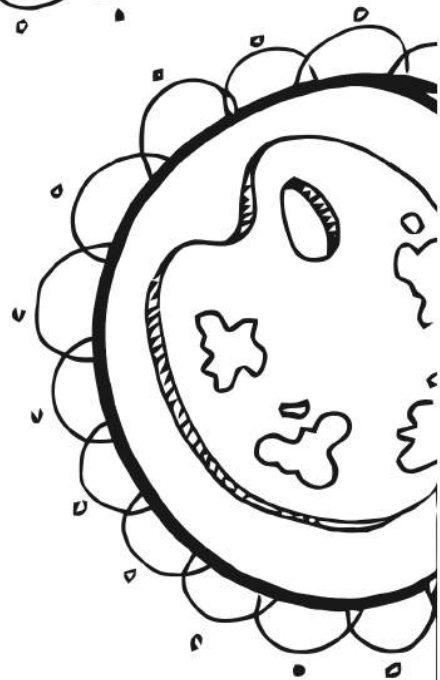
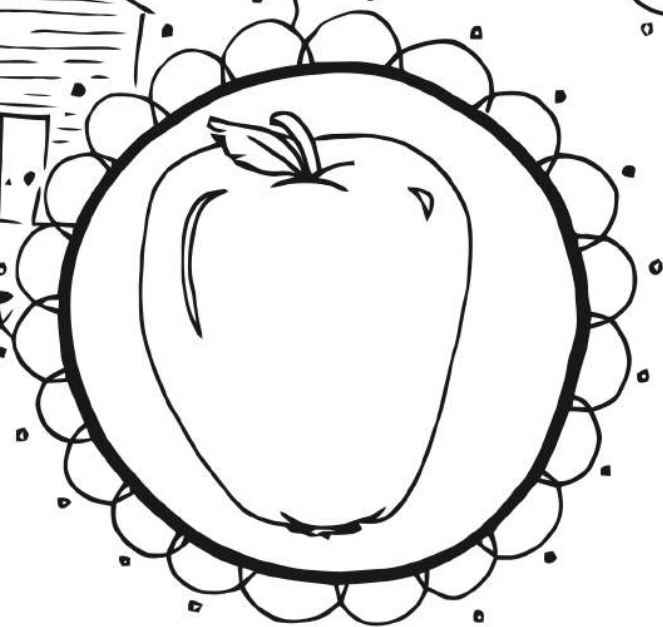




Father, help me
as I go...
Your Son to
serve,
Your love to
show!

SCHOOL

S
ummer soon shall turn to fall...



L
ord, let our school days bless us all!



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