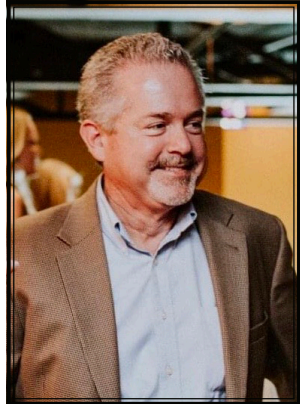


**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk

January/February 2023



Happy New Year!

It's hard to imagine, but this marks the start of my 4th year with you—we've been through a lot together! Along the way we've learned so many new things. Our services are livestreamed and recorded, expanding our reach to people near and far. We've managed to keep ourselves financially healthy, no easy task with all the transitions and challenges we've faced. And through it all we've grown in our commitment to Christ and our service in his name.

I'll say it again: Happy New Year!

Lots of people make New Year's resolutions. Here are some of the most popular:

- Exercise more
- Lose weight
- Get organized
- Learn a new skill or hobby
- Live life to the fullest
- Save more money / spend less money
- Quit smoking
- Spend more time with family and friends
- Travel more
- Read more

I see a few of my own on that list. Even when I don't accomplish everything I want to, it's good I think to have goals and hopes for making our lives better.

I have some resolutions for my work here at the church, too. I'm taking a risk here and sharing them with you, so that we're all on the same page in our shared ministry in 2023.

The first is to continue in the positive, service-minded direction we've been going. We shouldn't try to fix things that aren't broken, and so I'm keeping a sense of continuity as one of my top priorities.

But I also want to do better—and see all of us do better—in a couple of key areas.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

I'd like to restart our commitment to the Matthew 25 Initiative we joined last year. In January I'll start my annual series of messages on what it means to be the church of Jesus Christ, and this year I'll tie those four expressions (Fellowship, Worship, Discipleship and Mission) to our Matthew 25 commitments.

I also hope to continue to develop an effective ministry in the area of mental health awareness. We'll gather some people to talk about that, and see how we best can partner with the services already available in our community, and where we might be able to add some meaningful help as First Pres SLO.

Later this spring I plan to start a new kind of adult Sunday School class. We'll cover topics that are meaningful to the daily journey of faith that we're all on, and have some lively discussion about how we can grow individually and as a church. Stay tuned.

Finally, I hope to get a conversation started about how to learn from our Mission Study Project, and implement some of its findings in our church. So much good work went into that document, and we should join together in creating new ministries and areas of service for the next generation of members. Watch for an invitation to participate in a small group to talk about the Mission Study and its insights.

This coming year will be free (we hope!) of the COVID-related limits of the last three years. My hope is that we can use that freedom to grow in both depth and numbers. That's how we can all help make this a truly good and happy new year. Are you in?

Blessings to you and yours,

Pastor John

Happy New Year for Christian Ed.

Although it is hard to believe it is 2023, we look forward to the possibilities the New Year holds. We are excited about expanding our existing programs and adding new educational opportunities—especially in Mental Health and Aging. Plans are being discussed and put in place. We ask for your continued support and prayers for all we get to do. Watch for opportunities to join us. And if you have an idea, don't hesitate to share!

The year of 2022 was a good year. Lots of figuring out how to get back into the swing of things. What can be done the same way, what needs to be done differently, and what needs to be let go. What stayed constant is our love for God and for each other. You know, Love God, Love People, and Do Things. I would like to add to that list—Love You!

The kids have loved being back together on Wednesdays for "Wednesdays at the Rock." We not only enjoy each other, but we also have Bible lessons, sing, crafts, eat, and play. We are building a community of young believers, and it feels great.



The youth have been amazing through it all. They remain strong and committed to First Pres, SLO. We look forward to building our Youth program—so be on the lookout. You never know where they might pop up. We have five Seniors this year. Mark your calendars and join us in celebrating them on May 21. It will not only be Youth Sunday, but also we will honor our Grads at a “Grad Honor Banquet” following worship.



We look forward to expanding our Adult Ed options in the coming year. Watch for details. In the meantime, enjoy our many “Bible in Community Groups” and the “Thursday night Bible Study.” We hope to return to having an educational hour on Sunday mornings along with some other opportunities to learn and encourage us in our faith journey.

If you have any questions or need information on how to get connected with any of our educational opportunities, give Jen a call.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Christian Ed,
Jen

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

SESQUICENTENNIAL? WHAT IS THAT?

Our church will be celebrating our 150th birthday in 2025. It is now time to get organized for a wonderful celebration.

Would you like to help? Please let me--Virginia Walter at vwalter@calpoly.edu--or the church office know. Congregational Life Committee already has some great ideas, but we need lots of willing helpers to make this celebration spectacular.

I look forward to meeting with you to plan with yearlong celebration.

Friday, January 6, Zoom Bingo at 7 p.m. Please watch the Peak for the Zoom link! Call Pam Rodewald at (805)215-2396 or Ray McKelvey at (805)704-9352 for more information.

Sunday, January 8, the Epiphany Stars will be available after the service.

If you are not able to attend and would like a Star, please email or call Pam Rodewald—psrmony@mac.co or (805)215-239—and a Star will be delivered.



ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

The Alternative Gift Fair in December was very successful. It was wonderful to be able to meet again in Wilson Hall interacting with representatives from the charitable organizations that participated. The last two years, we learned how to successfully present the AGF virtually, so this year it was held both ways—in-person on December 4 and virtually from December 1-15. Special thanks go to the many people who worked hard to present this year's Fair.

The Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee thanks everyone who donated, giving as a charitable gift in a friend's or relative's name. It has been a blessing working with so many who gave generously of their time and money to this extremely worthwhile annual Missions outreach.

Karen Wiles

DESIGNATED PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC) wishes to let you know that they are continuing to work diligently and continuing to ask for the congregation's prayers.

Danielle Elzik – Chair

Dale Wolff, Peggy Estes, Amy Stapp,
Judi Davies, and Kathy Danes.

FRONT PORCH

Front Porch starts off the winter quarter without the smiling face of Emma Cantus. While sad to see her go to her new job at a Young Life camp in Oregon, a camp she attended as a youth, we wish her the best and know her energy and positivity will carry her far.

As I write this article in mid-December, Front Porch is in the unfortunate position of being \$15,000

below budget for 2022. Even with the amazing response at the fall fundraiser (and thank you to so many of you in this congregation for that response), the overall income for the year is falling short. Over the past two years, Front Porch has noticed a decline in church giving, with the exception of FPCSLO, and Front Porch celebrates FPCSLO's continued strong commitment. Not only with financial resources but also with meals and cookies, this congregation has shown its understanding and support of the mission of Front Porch—where all are welcome and each moment matters. The connection and support that many students get (often those struggling with some aspect of university life) is a testament to the power of the Holy Spirit working through the staff at Front Porch. Thank you FPCSLO for supporting this essential and special work.

Tune in next month to find out: Did Front Porch make its budget? How did it happen?

Happy 2023 and all the possibilities this new year holds.

ENDOWMENT FUND CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

ANOTHER GENEROUS GIFT

An anonymous donor has generously made the latest contribution the First Presbyterian Church, San Luis Obispo endowment. The gift will be added to the Unspecified General Endowments Fund, allowing Session to designate how to use the annual allotments, in perpetuity. This gift was given in honor of Elaine and Bert Townsend.

What memorial or honorary endowment donation comes to your mind? Most of the gifts that are parts of our endowment were made as a memorial to a family member and other gifts were bequests bearing the name of the donor.

While our endowment provides annual allotments now benefiting the church, think of the endowment as a future asset. We are enjoying the benevolence of past donors and it is up to us to likewise provide of the church's future.

We extend a special thank you to all the present and past members and friends of First Pres who have included the church in their wills or trusts and those to have contributed to the creation of our endowment.

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). We can help guide you through this important process or steer you to the right people and resources.

Even a modest gift will make a difference.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

To the following seniors (over 85) who have a birthday in January and February:

January 5 – Mary Butler

January 5 – Dorothy Pippin

January 15 – Joan Knowlton

February 1 - Marty O'Keefe

February 16 – Brooks Smith

February 24 - Carolyn Luenser

To everyone else who has a birthday in January or February.

If we have overlooked someone, please contact the church office.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

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 **Deacons** as they care for our church family;

For **Jen Rabenaldt** and those who work with our children and youth;

For **Scott Glysson** and the many wonderful musicians in our church;

For the Loper family in the passing of Kathy in December;

For the Townsend family in the passing of Elaine in December;

For our church members, friends, and family who are undergoing treatments for various health issues;

For our church's seniors, for their families and 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;

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

BOOK BROWSERS

Book Browsers will be meeting the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. via zoom. Please join us for discussions of the following books.

- Jan. 3 The Twelve Tribes of Hattie by A. Mathis
- Feb. 7 The Last Year of the War, by S. Meissner
- Mar. 7 The Lincoln Highway, by A. Towles
- Apr. 4 The Madness of Crowds, by L. Penny
- May 2 Tied to the Tracks, by S. Donati

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Shervem at 805-459-9844 or dshervem@charter.net.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

What is Stephen Ministry? First Presbyterian Church has long participated in Stephen Ministry because we can see the value of having friends who give encouragement when any of us faces difficult times in life. We have had from one to four Stephen Ministers visiting folks across the years. Currently, we are short-handed with just two of us available. Thus, we are asking YOU to consider taking the Stephen Ministry (hereafter referred to as SM) training class that will begin on January 7 in our church library.

SLO County is blest with an ecumenical SM program and is shared by several churches in the area. There are about 20 SM volunteers in SLO County, and our church has been a vital part of that development. The way to learn about SM is to join the training class. You will meet caring friends and neighbors and sharpen your own listening and caring skills. Upon completion of the class, you can then choose to serve a couple of years and reach out in hope and love to a person struggling with issues in life. If so, you will be a blessing for them (guaranteed) and if you decide not to serve, YOU will be more sensitive in responding to friends and family (also guaranteed).

The new year class begins with an all-day session on Saturday, January 7. Most of the sessions that follow will be shared via zoom in one-hour or two-hour segments. There are five or six SM leaders who will guide the class discussions. We are not formal counselors, WE are caregivers, and GOD is the caregiver. Our role is to help neighbors get through the “rough patch” they face with God’s strength and help.

Please let pastor John or SM leader Jim Seeber know of your interest of this extraordinary opportunity.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

A gracious thank you to all who contributed to the “Thank Offering” during the month of August. The \$1992 received will be used by Presbyterian Women at the national level to fund small, new, or expanded projects and small capital improvement projects through grants providing much-needed financial assistance to 20 to 30 worthwhile programs during the coming year. The recipients are always a mix of domestic and international projects.

You have also been so generous to bring so many gifts for us to send to the Kayenta Presbyterian Church in Arizona. We sent around 18 boxes filled with clothes, towels, personal items, school supplies, and many more items. We also sent money from our PW funds that the church uses to buy food for a Thanksgiving dinner and a Christmas dinner for the community. Pastor Norma McCabe really appreciates the many things they can pass out to the Navajo community surrounding the Kayenta Presbyterian Church. THANK YOU!!

We gathered for our Christmas brunch on December 3. The Women of the Word decorated the tables. Women of the Virginia Terry Circle/group provided the food. Women of the Friendship/Dorcas group gave the program. If you would like to be part of one of our Bible Study groups, please call Gloria DeKleine at (805) 801-9627.

During the program, Peggy Estes, 2021 recipient, presented the Honorary Life Membership Award for 2022 to Karen Wiles. Karen, a tireless volunteer, gives hours of her time. While she is a quiet and unassuming person that shrinks away from recognition, her efforts are hugely noticed and greatly appreciated.

Karen grew up in Long Beach, started playing violin in the fourth grade; went to Long Beach State College majoring in education; taught music at the elementary school level in Orange County; and as a single working mom, raised two beautiful daughters. She retired and moved to San Luis Obispo in 2005 and joined our church the same year.

Karen has served as a Deacon; sings in the choir; serves on various church committees; has led Adult Education classes; and volunteers to be a liturgist. As a former Deacon for twelve years, she was invaluable. She was always there, taking on the tough jobs like the Secretary, Food Angels' Coordinator, and Coordinator for the Ill and Bereaved. She sang with the Praise Choir and the Chancel Choir until it conflicted with her commitment with the San Luis Chamber Orchestra.

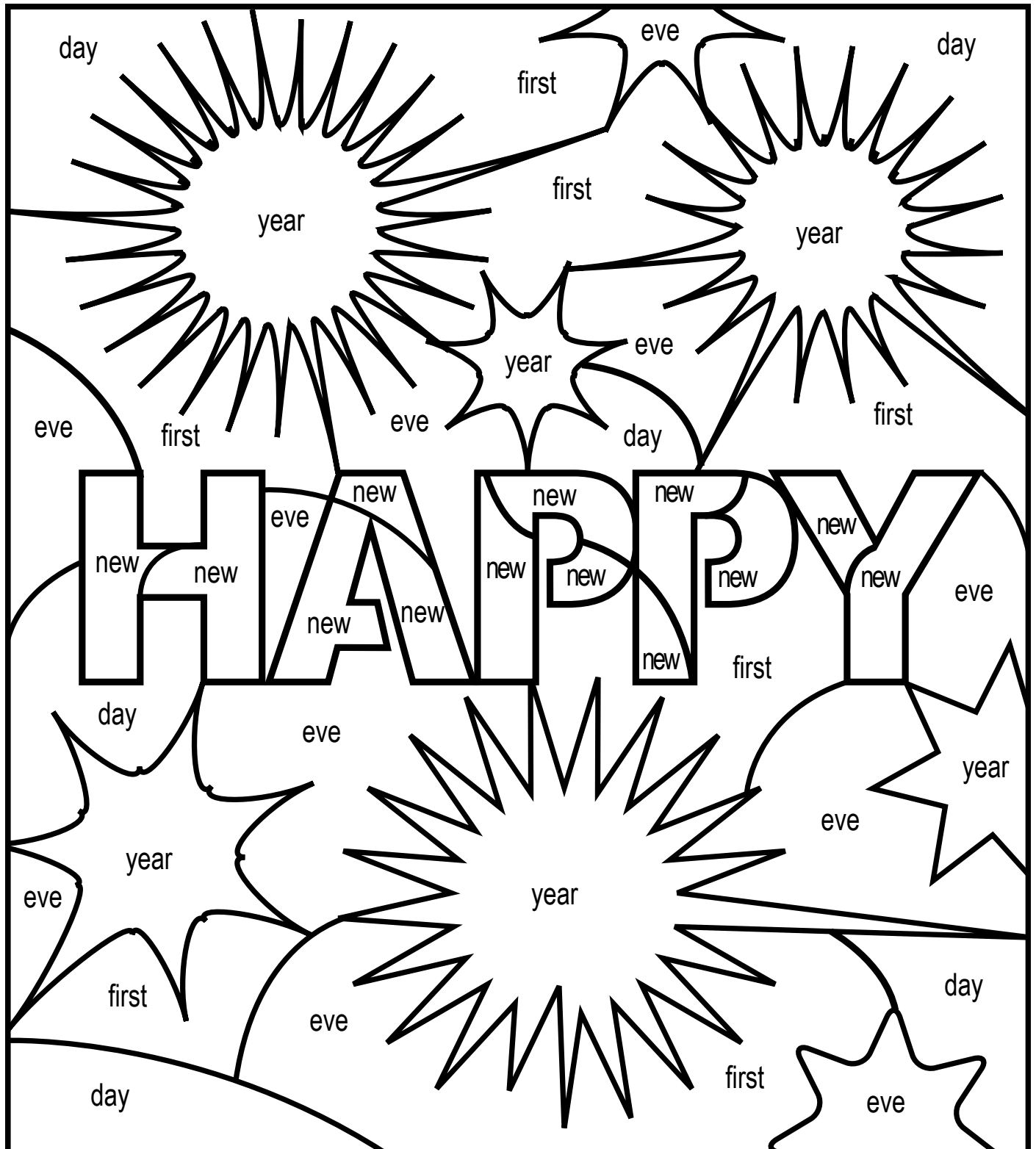
Additionally, she has served as a children's choir director; as a Stephen Minister; on the Worship Committee; currently serves with the Tuesday Morning Prayer Group; and she is on the Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee, the latter which she chairs. She also led the more recent class on the book *Just Mercy*. Furthermore, this year she spearheaded the Alternative Gift Fair (AGF)—a monumental undertaking to be sure.

Please join the Presbyterian Women in applauding Karen for all she has done for our church. Women in our church have been honoring a woman among us annually since 1948. A dozen of these women are still with us and continuing to serve.

Color the New Year's Day Words

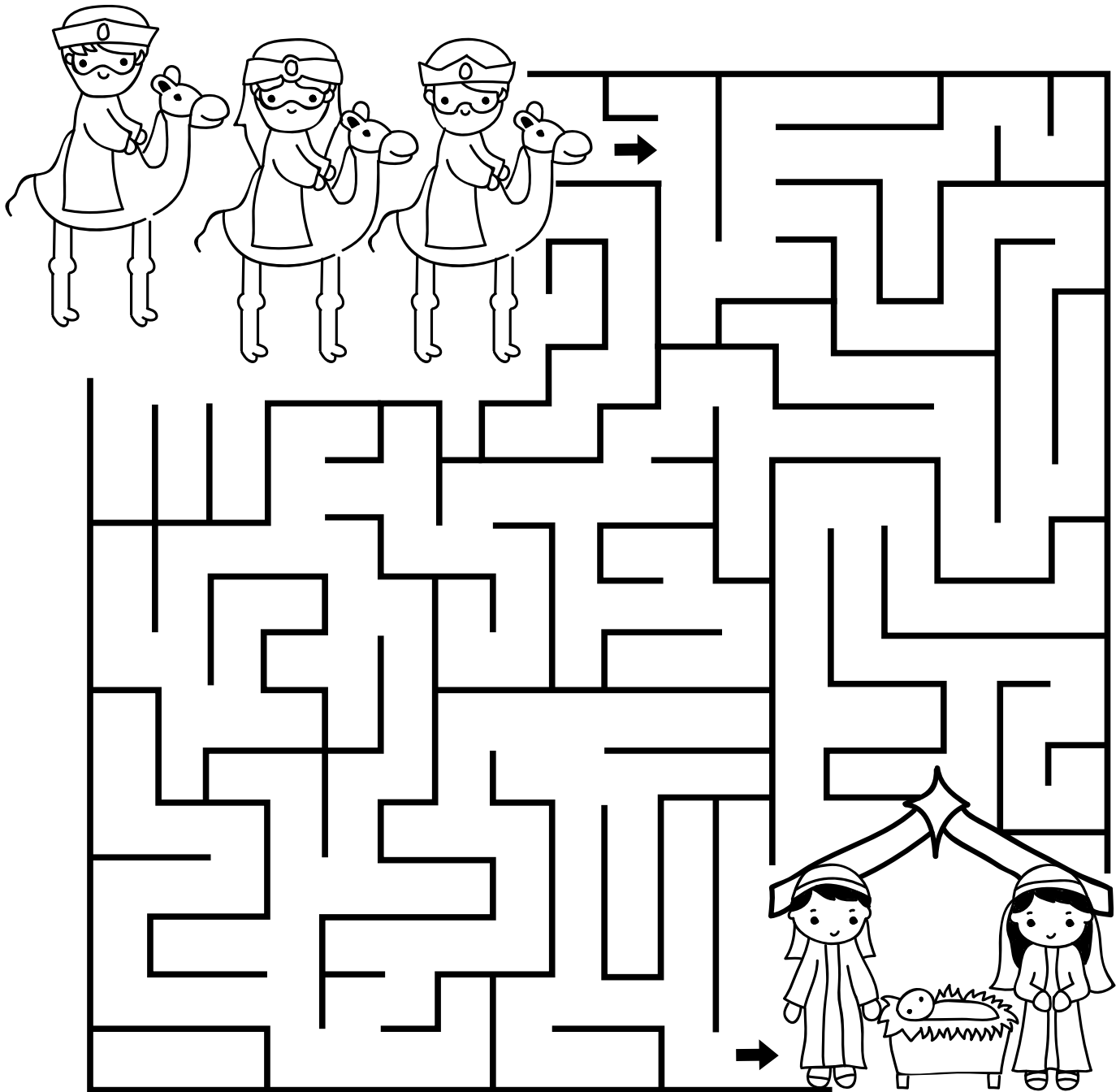
Color the spaces with the words by the colors listed below.

year = yellow new = green day = purple first = blue eve = pink



Nativity Maze

Help the Three Wise Men find the manger.



Learn About The Bible

What is in the Bible?

The word Bible means “books”, and the Bible is made up of many books.

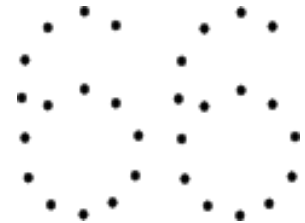
Connect the dots to find out how many books are in the Bible.



books in the
Old Testament



books in the
New Testament



books in the
whole Bible

Bible Writers Puzzle

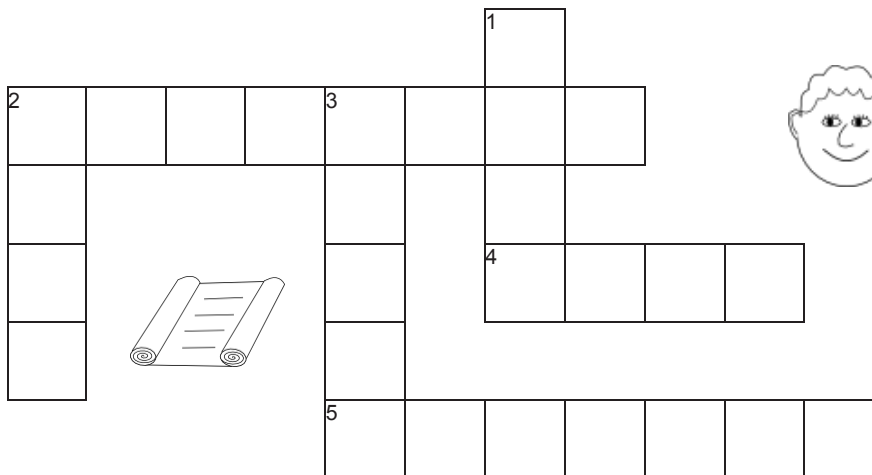
The books in the Bible were written by about 40 different people. Some wrote only one book. Each of the Bible writers in this puzzle wrote more than one book.

ACROSS

2. He wrote 2 books of prophecy
4. He wrote a gospel and a book of history
5. He wrote 3 books of poetry and wisdom

DOWN

1. He wrote 12 letters
2. He wrote 5 New Testament books
3. He wrote the first 5 books of the Bible



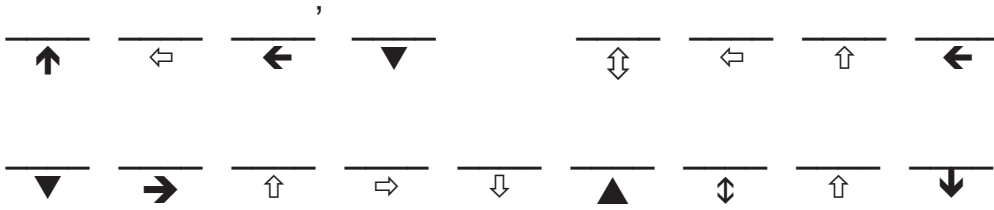
Name List: JEREMIAH, JOHN, LUKE, MOSES, PAUL, SOLOMON

The Bible is Inspired by God

“Inspired” means “God-breathed”. God told the Bible writers what to write. Then they wrote it in their own words.

Other Names for the Bible

Use the code to learn two other names for the Bible.



Code:



What Does the Bible Teach about Itself?

Look up and read each verse, and draw a line to what it says.

Psalm 119:11	The Bible lasts forever.
Psalm 119:105	The Bible is a light to show us where to go and what to do.
Isaiah 40:8	If I remember what the Bible says, it keeps me from sinning against God.
2 Timothy 3:15	The Bible helps us understand salvation through faith in Jesus.
2 Timothy 3:16 (first part)	The Bible teaches us what to do and corrects us when we are wrong.
2 Timothy 3:16 (second part)	The Bible is inspired by God.

The Bible and You

Put a checkmark next to each thing you should do.

- ___ Read the Bible often.
- ___ Memorize Bible verses.
- ___ Look in the Bible only when you have a problem.
- ___ Study the Bible.
- ___ Believe the Bible.
- ___ Obey the Bible.





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

San Luis Obispo

PO Box 591
981 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA
93406
tel: 805.543.5451
email: churchoffice@fpcslo.org
web: fpcslo.org

IMPORTANT DATES:

SERVICE TIMES AND DETAILS

Sunday, January 1 at 10 p.m.

Guest Preacher: Jim Seeber

Sunday, January 8 at 10 p.m.

Communion Sunday

Guest Preacher: Jen Rabenaldt

January 15

Special Congregational Meeting
following the service to elect church officers.