

**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk
March 2024



We're deep into the Lenten season now, this time of reflection and repentance as we prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter. I'll be honest here and say that this year is particularly difficult for me.

So much of what I'm seeing in the world is heartbreaking. Ukraine, Gaza, Haiti, Mexico, and parts of our own fractured nation. William Wordsworth wrote a line in an old sonnet that said: "The world is too much with us..."

I know the problems of the world are too much with me right now.

Lent offers something to people whose burdens are heavy. It's not a cure, really, at least not in the short term. Seriously—there are easier roads than looking inside our hearts when things outside are so broken. But Lent invites us not to long sessions of navel-gazing, but instead to looking hard at ourselves to see how we might provide some help and hope to those who are suffering...even when those sufferers are us.

During this season I'm preaching on the Great Ends of the Church, a list that shows why the church exists in the first place. A few Sundays ago I shared Chris Wright's line about the church and its mission. The line says: "God did not create a mission for his church, but a church for his mission." The mission of God is why we exist in the first place, and the Great Ends of the Church spell out that mission in detail. You can read them here:

The Great Ends of the Church

- The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind.
- The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God.
- The maintenance of divine worship.
- The preservation of the truth.
- The promotion of social righteousness.
- The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Each of those is rooted in some part of the ministry of Jesus—he did all of these while he walked the earth, and calls us to pick up the tasks in our own lives. As you move through this season of Lent—as we see the pain of the world through the lens of our own, let me invite you to consider how you can contribute to our shared mission of accomplishing the Great Ends of the Church.

Blessings to you all as we journey together to the Cross...and beyond.

Pastor John

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CHILDREN'S ED

As we begin the season of Lent, the kids are learning about what all the Lent things mean. We started with Ash Wednesday. The kids made an alleluia banner to hide throughout Lent and are challenged to not say the word alleluia/hallelujah until Easter morning. We also learned about being sorry and forgiveness. The kids wrote something they were sorry for or wanted to let go of on a paper butterfly and placed them, along with the adults, on the communion table at the Ash Wednesday service. We learned a lot on Ash Wednesday.

We will collect money for One Great Hour of Sharing and will learn about Gracie the fish and all of her adventures. On Palm Sunday, March 24, we will collect the Fish Banks and turn them in for the One Great Hour of Sharing Mission.

We continue to have a great time at Wednesdays at the Rock. All kids, 3 years through 6th grade, are welcome. We learn, sing, snack, craft, and play. It is a great way to spend a Wednesday afternoon.

Kids Sunday School takes place each Sunday after the "Time With Children" in Worship. All kids, K - 6th grade, are welcome.

We will hold our annual Egg Hunt on March 24, 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. This is a community event and all are welcome. We have so many eggs to hide. It'll be great! See you on March 24. Bring friends, family, and neighbors.

Nursery Care is available each Sunday morning from 9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. All kids, birth through 4 years old, are welcome.

Children's Ed

Jen Rabenaldt, Brooke Palmerston, Annabella Priest, Scarlet Emsheimer, Bella Boulais, and Ash Homuth



YOUTH

Bella and Ash are doing a great job with the Youth. Our small but mighty group has fun, a lot of energy, and just enough goofy to make Youth Group a blast. All Youth, 7th through 12th grades, are welcome. Join us for Fellowship, Lessons, Food, and Fun.

The Youth are collecting items to put hygiene kits together for their service project for March. Please donate to this project if you can. The Youth will put the kits together, not only for the Blessing Box but also for those who want to take a few to have in the cars to hand out when they see someone in need. We will be collecting nonperishable food, socks, toiletries, etc., until March 10 when the Youth will put the kits together.

The Youth will be serving coffee on March 24. They will have a gentle donation raiser during coffee hour, "Tips for Trips." It'll be fun. Come to say hi.

Friends are always welcome. If you are interested in donating a meal one Sunday, let Jen know. You can stay and enjoy the meal or just drop it off. Donations are also welcome to help buy food when there is a Sunday that no one signed up to bring anything.

The Youth are planning some fun activities this year. Watch for details.

Youth Team

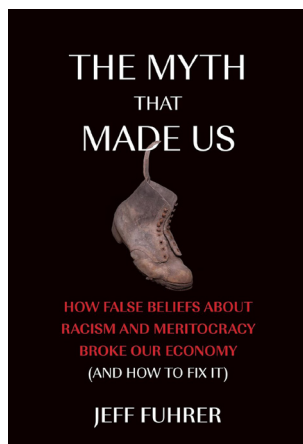
Jen Rabenaldt, Bella Boulais, and Ash Homuth



LIBRARY REVIEW

The Myth That Made Us, by Jeff Fuhrer, has been added to the library and is available for borrowing. It is located on the book cart.

The Myth That Made Us argues that systemic racism continues to produce vastly disparate economic outcomes and that our brand of capitalism favors doing little to reduce disparities. Racism has been fueled by the false myths of a supposedly post-racist nation, of the self-made man, of the primacy of profit and shareholder value-maximizing for businesses, and of minimal government interference. Rather than merely laying blame at the feet of both conservatives and liberals for aiding and abetting an unjust system, Fuhrer charts a way forward. He gives evidence from data with insights from community voices and outlines a system that provides more equal opportunity to accumulate both human and financial capital. He emphasizes embracing humility, research-based approaches, and community involvement as ways to improve economic opportunity. (Review Adapted From Amazon)

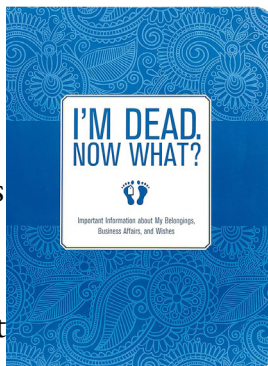


ADULT EDUCATION

IM DEAD - NOW WHAT?

Taught by Bob Gordon
April 7th, 14th, 21st and
28th. 11:27 AM.

A perfect opportunity to review your final arrangements or create them if you haven't yet. We will have experts in the field for speakers. A perfect gift for the ones you leave behind, they will love you for it. Please sign up for the class on either March 17th or 24th.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE BOOK BROWSERS

Book Browsers will again meet the first Tuesday of each month via zoom. Our discussions will begin at 7 p.m.

The following is our schedule for the year:

- Mar. 5 You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey,
by Amber Ruffin
- Apr. 2 Secrets of Charmed Life,
by Susan Meisner
- May 7 The Undocumented Americans,
by Karla Cornejo Villavicencio

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy Birthday to the following seniors (over 85) who have birthdays in March:

- March 5 – Deon Dunaway
- March 6 – Mary Ruth Mach
- March 8 – Marilyn Sparks
- March 17 – Tom Sparks
- March 21 – Shirley Keif

And to everyone else who celebrates a March birthday.

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

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

Please pray for our church family, especially the following:

For **Pastor John D’Elia** as he continues healing after his heart surgery,

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** in her role as C.R.E.,

For **Bella Boulais** and **Ash Homuth** as they work with our children and youth,

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

For the family and friends of **Margaret McCallum** who passed away in January,

For those who support our worship services with their technical help to make it possible for live streaming and recording of the services,

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

For all our church’s senior citizens, for their families and care givers,

For members, family & support personnel serving in the military,

For all of us as we serve God wherever He calls us.

Because we care about you, if you are hospitalized or ill, please call the church office (805) 543-5451 to leave a message for Pastor John or the Deacons.

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

BUDGET AND FINANCE ENDOWMENT

Create A Lasting Legacy: DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS

A donor-advised fund offers a unique giving opportunity. It is especially appealing to individuals who are interested in staying involved in the giving process.

Through an irrevocable gift to the PCUSA Foundation or other financial institution, a donor-advised fund allows the donor to make periodic “advisory recommendations” for the charitable distributions from the fund, such as stewardship to First Presbyterian Church, San Luis Obispo. A fund is sometimes established with family members serving as advisors to make recommendations for the fund’s grants. This family involvement can provide the opportunity for sharing personal values, evaluating charitable mission needs, and establishing priorities for you to witness to others—in effect, it can shape a culture of giving for your family.

A donor-advised fund also offers tax advantages. Appreciated assets used to establish the fund may be deductible at the current fair market value and will bypass capital gains tax liability.

DONOR-ADVISED FUND

- Flexibility to support a variety of programs and agencies
- Ability to recommend distributions of principle, in whole or in part, to meet needs of the charities you support, especially FPCSLO,
- Avoidance of cumbersome responsibilities associated with creation of a private foundation.
- Offers tax advantages

If you 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 the Endowment Committee: Peggy Estes, Jerry Kaml, 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.

MISSIONS **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

Millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources—clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing are Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People. All of these programs work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope. The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in the United States has granted 3.1 million dollars in the US and 35 countries. Ninety grants impacting 22 countries have been given by the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Over 55,000 pounds of seeds and seedlings were distributed for farming. By joining together, amazing things can happen. Please give generously.

Please give generously this Lenten season. The offering will be collected on Palm Sunday.

40 PRADO

Record Setting Year For People's Kitchen Lunches Served

Members of First Pres have been faithfully serving Wednesday noon meals to the unhoused and undernourished through People's Kitchen since the practice began decades ago in our own parking lot.

Your Missions Committee continues to coordinate the meals for the second Wednesday of each month. And new volunteers are always welcome! This year was one for the record books. We served 1,065 "first meals" on our 12 service

days. This does not count folks who came back for a second helping, or even a third if any food remained.

Overall, the Kitchen served 32,799 first time meals in 2023, which was 4,706 more than in 2022.

We thank the congregation for your financial support, service, and prayers that make this effort possible.

Stephen Brown
Member, Missions Committee

DEACONS

Easter Flower Dedications: A Loving Way To Honor Loved Ones, Beautify The Sanctuary, And Support The Deacons' Flower Fund

**DEADLINE FOR DEDICATIONS: NOON,
MONDAY, MARCH 25**

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 spring plants beautify our sanctuary on Easter morning and then are delivered to the homebound, ill, bereaved, and others in our congregation. We have more than 65 people who will appreciate having a beautiful plant delivered to their home this Easter!

In addition, we have partnered with an important mental health program in our community to provide these beautiful blessings to our members. Our Easter flowers are being purchased through Growing Grounds Downtown, a store that provides work and training opportunities for clients of Transitions Mental Health Association. TMHA is a non-profit organization.

Each loving dedication can be made for a suggested \$15 donation to the Deacons' Easter Flower Fund. Your personal dedication will be printed in the Easter Bulletin on March 31.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

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. **Deacons will also be available to accept your donations and dedications on Sundays after church on March 10, 17, and 24.**

Suggested donation: \$15.00 -- Your donation supports the Deacons' Flower Fund. It is not for a purchase of a plant to take home. After the Easter service, the plants will be delivered 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 Deacon's Flowers and enter the amount. Don't forget to sign in to your account. After you enter 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.

DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you have an interest in helping to deliver Easter plants, please contact Kathy Wolff at the email address or phone number above.

The Deacons thank you heartily for your support of this Mission

Palm Sunday, March 24

10 am in the Sanctuary

Community Egg Hunt, March 24

1 pm in the Courtyard

All are welcome!

Good Friday, March 29

7 pm – Tenebrae Service

in the Sanctuary

Childcare provided

Holy Saturday, March 30

10 am – Prayer & Meditation Service

in the Sanctuary

Suited for Adults

Childcare provided

Easter Sunrise Service, March 31

6:30 am (off-site)

Please contact the office for more information.

Easter Sunday, March 31

10 am in the Sanctuary

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

You are invited to walk the stations – stopping at each for prayer and meditation. This can be a moving experience for individuals or families.

Please plan to prayerfully participate in this very personal walk with Jesus. Each Station was created by a church member or family.

The Stations of the Cross will be up through March 24.



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San Luis Obispo

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