

**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk

November 2023



Lots of unexpected news these days. From events around the world, to surprises (good and not) in our own lives. Surprises can throw us off balance. They can take us out of our plans and force us to review and revise and rethink.

I'm not all that thrilled with the surprises in my own life these days.

One of the main reasons we read the Bible is to get a glimpse into the heart and mind of God. But another of the reasons is simply for comfort. Or encouragement. Or to be reminded of the ways God loves us and cares for us, even in challenging times. It's the passages that offer that comfort and encouragement that are most familiar to us.

Take Psalm 23.

It's one of the best known passages in the Bible. People who have gone to church for a long time may have it memorized. People who've never darkened the door of a church might even be able to recite or at least recognize some lines. That's how familiar Psalm 23 is in our culture.

It acknowledges God as shepherd right from the start, as the one who guides us and protects us. That's meant to be a verse of comfort and a reminder of who God is. And the response from the Psalmist confirms that: Because God is my shepherd, I shall not want.

That leads us to "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..." It's a reminder of our mortality, but it also points to God being with us even in those dark and shadowy times. It's no wonder people read these words for comfort.

The promise at the end is the key promise of the psalm. "Surely your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever." That's the one that gets me. That's the one that reaches into our fears and reminds us that God will be with us forever.

Those words are comforting when we get hit with unexpected news, or an unexpected loss. It's more than simply saying "God will take care of things." What we get in the 23rd Psalm is a reminder that God loves us and protects us, that he'll walk with us even in the darkest places, and that in the end we get to live with him forever.

I don't know about you, but that's a huge source of peace and comfort for me right now. I hope it offers the same to you, as we move into this month of giving and Thanksgiving. May it be so.

Pastor John

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CHILDREN'S ED

We are thankful for the dedicated families and kids we get to minister to. We are working our way towards Advent and putting together a Christmas Program and Bake Sale.

The first Sunday of Advent is December 3, and we will celebrate with an all-Church Advent Night in Wilson Hall from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Please join us as we create and enjoy each other's company and prepare for the birth of Jesus. Everyone is welcome!

Wednesdays at the Rock continues each Wednesday from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. We have plenty of room for more. All kids 3 years through 6th grade are welcome. We enjoyed the fall season "At the Rock" where the kids had a great time making crafts and creating surprises for our Older Adults.

Sunday School is going well and the kids were excited to participate in Communion. We look forward to Communion being a special part of our program each month.

We continue to offer Nursery care on Sunday's from 9:45 a.m. until 11:15 a.m. It has been a joy to have the youngest spend time together each week. Stop by and say "Hi" if you get a chance.



YOUTH

We continue to meet each Sunday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. It's been fun having different people bring and share a meal and conversation. We look forward to getting to know even more of you. Thanks for signing up to sponsor a Youth Group. A special "thanks" to Scott Machado for helping to organize all of the "goings on"!

The Youth were blessed to participate in "Kirkin of the Tartans"—a special service of remembrance and honor. It's always good to see the Youth involved in the life of the Church.

In case you haven't noticed, these same wonderful youth have been up to some "shenanigans." However, we have a great group of kids; and we would always love to have more. It's not about the numbers, but we have a lot to offer and share. All Youth 7th through 12th grade are WELCOME!

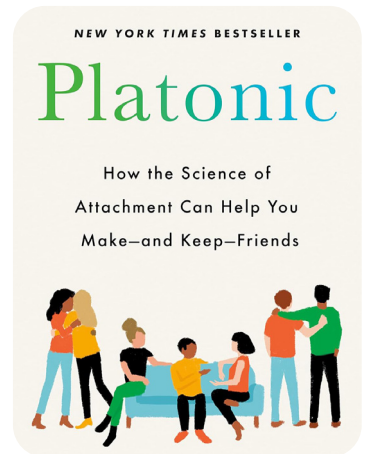
Youth Team
Jen, Scott, Bella and Ash



LIBRARY REVIEW

Platonic by Marisa G. Franco has been added to the library and is available for borrowing. It is located on the book cart.

How do we make and keep friends in an era of distraction, burnout, and chaos, especially in a society that often prizes romantic love at the expense of other relationships? This book unpacks the latest, often counterintuitive findings about the bonds between us.



Making a new friend, and deepening longstanding relationships is possible at any age—in fact, it's essential. The good news: there are specific, research-based ways to improve the number and quality of your connections using the insights of attachment theory and the latest scientific research on friendship. Platonic provides a clear and actionable blueprint for forging strong and lasting connections with others. (Review Adapted From Amazon)

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEW MEMBER'S CLASS

We will have a New Member's class on Sunday, November 12, after the service. It will begin at approximately 11:30 a.m. with lunch provided. Pastor John D'Elia will give you information about our Presbyterian faith. Please call the office at (805) 543-5451 or email Pam Rodewald at psrmony@mac.com if you plan to attend.

DATE FOR EIGHT GROUPS

Please come to a final activity for this past year's Date for Eight groups. We want to hear about your experiences!

We will meet on Saturday, November 11, at 4 p.m. in Wilson Hall. Please bring a finger food snack to share. We will provide beverages. Help us plan for the next round of Date for Eight, which will begin in the New Year!

THE 150 YEAR CELEBRATION

A group is forming to help organize our 150-year anniversary in 2025.

This fun filled group will put together regular presentations throughout the year. Information for the committee is being prepared by a group of church historians. I cannot imagine a more fun activity for our church than this celebration. Learn a lot about our history and enjoy presenting it to the congregation.

Join the happiest and most fulfilling committee ever! Please contact Virginia Walter at 805-543-8260 or vwalter@calpoly.edu to sign-up for the committee.

COFFEE SERVERS

Congregational Life is looking for volunteers to make and serve the coffee for fellowship time after the Sunday services. We will train you and help you to get started by partnering with you. Please contact Evelyn Ruehr at eruehr@calpoly.edu or Pam Rodewald at psrmony@mac.com to sign up!

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:

- Nov. 7 The Paper Daughters of Chinatown
by Heather B. Moore
- Dec. 5 The Book of Lost Names,
by Kristin Harmel
- Jan. 2 You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lucy,
by Amber Ruffin
- Feb. 6 West with Giraffes,
by Lynda Rutledge
- Mar. 5 Bloomsbury Girls,
by Natalie Jenner
- 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 November:

- Barbara Gillson – November 5
- Patti Hempenius – November 5
- Jim Nielsen – November 7
- Lionel Beyer – November 10
- Lou Pippin – November 10

And to everyone else who celebrates a November birthday.

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

DATE FOR EIGHT GROUP

Our group has had a great time with our get togethers. Each member took a month and planned an event. We have played board games in the Church Library, had lunch at the Village, breakfast in Avila, a brunch at a member's home, walking in the Elfin Forest in Los Osos with lunch afterwards, and a visit to the Steinbeck Center and lunch at the Steinbeck House in Salinas. There will be several more outings to come. We have gotten to know each other's backgrounds and life experiences and formed a comradery. The group has thoroughly enjoyed all our events.

Judith Collins



PICTURED (at the Steinbeck House):
[back row left to right] – Don Green, Tom Sparks, Deon Dunaway, and Catherine Petty
[front row left to right] – Joan Green, Marilyn Sparks, George Ohgi, and Judith Collins

BUDGET AND FINANCE ENDOWMENT

Create A Lasting Legacy:

STATE OF FPCSLO ENDOWMENT

This month's column is a testimonial regarding another form of life income plan.

The ENDOWMENT FUND of our church remains healthy. While the 3rd quarter of 2023 resulted in a quarterly loss, the Fund has a strong and positive gain over nine months. The numbers for the endowment principal are:

Jan 1, '23	Sept 30 '23	Change
\$687,096	\$710,270	+\$23,174

Such growth bodes well for a good allotment in 2024, but we must wait for the December 31 results to be sure. At that time, the Endowment Sub-Committee and Budget and Finance Committee make a recommendation to Session.

Part of the Endowment principal growth is new contributions. There has been only one gift to our Endowment so far this year. There is still time to make a 2023 Endowment contribution and reap the probable tax benefits. Contributions may be added to an existing fund (any amount) or a new fund can be created by the donor (as little as \$1,000.00) and can be by cash, appreciated securities, IRA distribution, life insurance, or other assets. How about selling that car or boat you don't want and donating the proceeds to the church.

Contributions to an existing fund can be made by cash, check, transferring marketable securities, or by debit/credit card. Contributions are accepted personally by the Church Treasurer, at any time online, or mailed to First Presbyterian Church, San Luis Obispo, Attn. Church Treasurer. Talk to the Church Treasurer for a copy of our DONATION GUIDELINES.

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 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.

MISSIONS

PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS SPECIAL OFFERING

Thank you for your generous donations to the Peace and Global Witness Special Offering received in October on World Communion Day. Your gifts will be joined with those of other Presbyterians across the Nation to support peacemaking and reconciliation locally and around the world, reminding us that we are all connected to one another.

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

It is almost time for the annual Alternative Gift Fair. The in-person Fair will be Sunday, December 3 in Wilson Hall after the Church Service. Representatives from the 12 charities will be there to chat with “shoppers” about their organization’s work. The fair will also be on line until December 15 so “shoppers” can peruse the website from home.

Later this month, you will be receiving the Alternative Gift Fair brochure in the mail with information about the 12 charities and organizations along with instructions on how to give charitable gifts to honor family and friends. Donations can be made at the Fair on December 3, or mailed to the church, or made on line.

SLO4HOME

SLO4Home was established in the fall of 2021 to welcome Afghan refugees to San Luis Obispo, working with Church World Service. CWS has been resettling refugees in the U.S. since WWII and has provided excellent oversight for SLO4Home. Since its inception, the mission of SLO4Home has expanded to include refugees from other war torn countries. The first two Afghan families, related, have left the support of SLO4Home and are self supporting members of our community—working and going to Cuesta. Since then, we have welcomed three related Syrian families with adult children, three Ukrainian families with small children (one child was born just two weeks after arrival in the U.S.) and a single Afghan woman. All are housed and supported as they begin the process of learning English and American culture, find jobs, and make new homes for themselves. Several of these families spend time each week at the church, as they study English with Literacy for Life on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Please support these families with your prayers as we are once again exposed to the atrocities of war in our world. Please pray for peace.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN KAYENTA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CHRISTMAS GIFTS-

The Presbyterian Women of our church are gathering items to send to the people of the Navajo Nation in Kayenta, AZ, again this fall. We have a list of things that would be helpful to the congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Kayenta as well as the community – such things as personal grooming items, towels (bath and kitchen), small purses, sewing supplies, tools, flash lights, picture frames, reading glasses, socks for all ages, baseball caps for men and boys, gloves of various kinds, warm jackets, and sweaters (many people wear large sizes like

2X and 3X). There is always a need for school supplies or office supplies. Some of the older parishioners like to do puzzles.

As we have in the past, we will be gathering these items in the church office during November as well as at the Welcome Kiosk before and after worship on Sundays in November.

This year we are also introducing the opportunity of purchasing items from a gift list directly from Amazon. To purchase items from the gift list, click on the following link or copy the link into your browser. This will take you to the list from which you may select items and have them directly sent to the Kayenta Presbyterian Church. Shipping is included if you are an Amazon Prime member, but is additional if you are not. The link is:

<https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/2EMNAYDOH5L8G>

You may also search the gift registry to find the list for FPC SLO.

We hope to have all the items to Kayenta early in December. Presbyterian Women also plan to send money for community dinners for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Save the Date...

Presbyterian Women Christmas Gathering
Sunday, December 17, at 11:30 a.m.

Following worship and fellowship time in
Wilson Hall

...and remember ALL WOMEN are
WELCOME!!!



**FIRST
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