



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk

January, 2018



Happy New Year! So, what do you hope for in 2018? If you're like me, you're probably guarded regarding what the possibilities are for this coming year. It seems to me that the biggest disasters always seem to coincide with events on which we pin so much of our hopes. The times we are convinced will be the best often turn out to be the very worst. For instance, how many big family get-togethers- New Years Eve, Super Bowl Parties, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving- start out fun, then turn into fiascoes? Cousin Jim still won't talk to Uncle Frank, and the stains from Aunt Margaret's cheese dip will never come out of the carpet. Weddings are another good example when bombs of both tiny and titanic proportion are regularly detonated. The number of things that go wrong on wedding days- cakes dropped, rings lost, blazing heat, torrential rain, flowers delivered to another planet- is about equal to the number of people who wish they had just eloped. Or when a baby is born and the new parents have to share the child with both sides of grandparents and each side "knows" what's best for the new parents and their grandchild and each conflicts with the other.

Sometimes it seems that whenever we expect the best of times, we get the worst of times instead. Thankfully, the reverse is also true. How many of us find ourselves looking back on our early days scratching, scrapping, starving, struggling days and suddenly realize that those were the best of times? What makes life so full, so rich, so wonderful is that we can never completely filter out the bad from the good or the good from the bad. There is always a little bit of both on our plate, spicing up our diet in unexpected ways.

If this "mixed grill" doesn't sit well with some of you who like to divide things up into neat categories, consider this: "There are two types of people in the world- optimists and pessimists. An optimist is a person who doesn't know any better. A pessimist is a person who doesn't know any better." A steady menu of similar kinds of experiences should create in all of us the same response as God's promise did in the Bible. Take for instance Abraham. Remember Abraham? Already an old man when he first hears God's call, Abraham obediently begins his long, wandering search for a home based on God's promise. Now, when God promises that he and Sarah shall have their own son, Abraham believes. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, Abraham's faith enables him to "hope against hope." And out of the worst conditions- extreme old age and barrenness- God brings the best to Abraham and Sarah, their son Isaac.

Or how about Simon in the New Testament? Few people combine the best and the worst in themselves as combustively as Simon Peter. He was the first called by Jesus. Peter was always in the forefront of whatever was going on. In a miraculous moment of insight, Peter correctly identified and confessed Jesus as "the Christ." But, it's also true that no one but Judas betrayed Jesus more than Peter. He slept through Gethsemane, ran away at the first sign of trouble, then vehemently denied Jesus three times. Yet, it's out of Peter- one who might easily be called the worst disciple- that the best eventually comes. Jesus takes the very man who is often the worst at understanding what Jesus is talking about (a trait that inspires Jesus to rebuke Peter with a "Get behind me, Satan"), and entrusts him with the very best he has to offer- the church itself (Matthew 16:18-19).

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CHILDREN'S ED NEWS

It's hard to believe 2017 is over. What a great year we had in Children's Ed. We would like to thank all of you who have supported us this year. We could not have accomplished what we did without you. We most definitely have angels among us. Happy New Year- Here's to a fantastic 2018!



In December we had a lot of activities and projects. Some of the highlights include Advent Night, where we celebrated Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. The evening was filled with

fellowship and a great time was had by all.



The Children's Musical and Bake Sale - The kids and youth did a great job and the bake sale was a huge success.

Thank you to all who brought goodies for us to sell. A great big thank you goes to Becky for leading the kids and directing the musical- it was amazing! And to Warren and MaryEl for being our donation takers during the bake sale.

WEDNESDAYS AT THE ROCK

We will be on a little break for the holidays. We will start up again on January 10. All kids Kindergarten through 6th grade are welcome. The kids have worked and played hard this session and we look forward to what the next session brings.

I would like to share a sweet story from the Wednesdays at the Rock program. We had a child attend VBS this past summer. She felt so welcomed and loved that when her family heard about Wednesdays at the Rock they wanted her to attend. When she first came to us we barely heard a word from her. She was a very shy and working to find her place. Now four months later she has become one of our most faithful and has opened up so beautifully. Recently she volunteered to pray before our dinner and said a variety things that she was thankful for but the thing she said, that you all need to hear, is that she is most thankful for this church. This, my friends, is why we do what we do and why we work so hard on our programs. Not only did she volunteer to pray she had

a part in our Christmas Musical and did a fantastic job with her lines and singing. Her mother and older sister were in tears by the time it was over. They are so thankful and we are so blessed by this experience.

Watch for upcoming Events for Winter and Spring - coming your way soon!

The Children's Ed. Committee is a very hard working committee and deserve more praise than I can give here. They truly make the dreams of our program come true - there is so much more we would like to do and thank you in advance for your continued love and support.

-Jen

Your Children's Ed Committee

Teri Cueto, Becky Falasco, MaryEl Hansen, Bonnie Kraemer, Becky Moseley, and Diane Shervem

Teachers

Diane Shervem, Kathrine Gross, Karlyn Tremaine, Stephanie Vigil, Anna Walden, and Ashley Carder

FROM THE DEACONS

To those of you who made donations to the poinsettias "in memory of" or "in honor of" loved ones, the Deacons thank you. The lovely plants adorned our sanctuary at Christmas and then were delivered to those who were unable to attend a service, were truly challenged by life events this past year, or were in need of some extra cheer. To those of you who helped the Deacons deliver the poinsettias, we thank you for your extra sets of helping hands.

Throughout the year, the Deacons continue to deliver flowers to parishioners who are homebound, ill or bereaved. You may have noticed those flowers decorating the kiosk between services. The Christmas poinsettias, Easter flowers and "Sunday" flowers are funded solely through your donations for the respective plant dedications and donations earmarked for the "Deacons Fund." The Deacons Fund is not part of the church's budget. So, from the bottom of our heart, thank you for helping us to keep all of these flower ministries going.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

PW CHRISTMAS BRUNCH



The women's brunch was a fun event with Becky and Alison leading us in music, hymns, and Christmas carols, and a delicious meal lovingly prepared by Evelyn and PW board members. It was a successful event. The highlight of the morning was the presentation of the Honorary Life Membership Award to Judy Springer. Yes, she was surprised, but oh so deserving.

Judy's life has been a continuous service to Christ in her work as a teacher, in her leadership roles in PEO, and to others in the church. As a pastor's wife she always gives over and above most of us but that is natural behavior for her. She loves people and we love Judy. Congratulations Judy! You are a blessing to us all.

Coming up in January, the Bible study groups will be covering Lesson 4 in our study book "Cloud of Witnesses," the community of Christ in Hebrews. We will be looking at 'In Community with God's Messengers!' Angels are ever present in our midst...

NEW MEMBERS

Sandra Freeman was born and raised in San Luis Obispo. She's lived in Oregon, Arizona, and all over California. She returned to SLO in 2000 to care for her stepfather. Her hobby is genealogy.

Alexis Lewis was raised in Atascadero and now lives in Los Osos with husband Charlie and daughter, Lydia. She enjoys being outdoors and opening her home to family and friends.

Charlie Lewis was born in SLO and raised in Santa Margarita. He's married to his high school sweetheart and they welcomed a daughter in 2017. He works for SLO Search and Rescue and enjoys camping and road trips with his family.

Clarice Milanesi was born and raised in Visalia. She taught school for 34 years and retired last year. She and Mike have one son, Matthew, who was adopted

think about God's messengers of hope for our lives in the new year 2018 and join us to learn more. You never know when an encounter may bring us God's messengers love and support. This is a perfect time to celebrate the Birth of Christ in the season of Epiphany.

The support to the Navajo mission church was an overwhelming success due to all the loving gifts donated to the community of believers at the Kayenta Presbyterian Church in Arizona. Thank you all for the awesome amount of love you gave them. They will certainly will have a blessed Christmas and a more comfortable life with your thoughtful gifts.

Join us in prayers for the fire victims in Southern California. Natural disasters and times of crisis will bring us closer to others. We need one another and above all else we need God at these times. It is a sad time for those who have lost everything. They need a sense of hope and assurance of the comfort that God provides.

-Dorothy Truesdale, Moderator

when he was a baby. They've made their second home in Los Osos their primary residence and Clarice is excited to make FPCSLO her church home.

Mike Milanesi was born in Fresno and raised in Visalia. He has a degree in entomology and spent 31 years as both a classroom teacher and science curriculum specialist. He and Clarice married in 1986 at First Pres in Visalia and adopted their son, Matthew, in 1991. Mike enjoys golfing, kayaking, hiking, and playing the drums.

A very warm welcome to all our new members!



Pastor's Note, continued:

Also remember that Jesus did his best work under the worst conditions. After entering Jerusalem, Jesus gathered his disciples for one last meal together. There he revealed to them, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me" (Matthew 26:21). Then, with full knowledge of the weaknesses and treachery at their table, "Jesus took... bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat, this is my body'" (Matthew 26:26). On the night where all the very worst of their fears came true, Jesus gave his disciples, and all of us, the best of himself.

This is the promise of Christmas that leads us into our New Year filled with hope for ourselves, our families, our nation, yes and even the world. All of us, even and especially at our very worst, are promised that God can do with us the very best. It's that promise that enables us to live on in faith continually "hoping against hope."

Look at history and you will see that the worst has repeatedly produced the best. For instance, on his way to death, Justin Martyr penned words of faith and love that have endured for 19 centuries. Out of his experience with a corrupted, dry-bones, institutionalized faith, Martin Luther re-read his Bible and breathed the air of Reformation back into the church. So too Michelangelo, while lying on his back, his "canvas" curving overhead, produced the glory of the Sistine Chapel. Or how about stone-deaf Beethoven who composed music so moving that it brought audiences to tears.

And then there's "Hell's Kitchen" in New York, where Walter Rauschenbusch shook up the church once more with his call for a "social gospel." Or Schweitzer feeling called to give back some of the many gifts he had been given, took his considerable talents to a tiny, isolated mission in Africa and stayed on, even in the middle of war. Then there is The Salvation Army intentionally targeting the very worst in society as their concern. And choosing the very worst slums of Calcutta for her mission, Mother Teresa's order now reaches millions as a witness for Christ's love and compassion.

This list can go on and on, and it's God who uses us to share The Good News of the gospel. The best has come, the best is with us now, and the best is yet to come. And I hope you believe this in the worst way. I hope you experience this in a very profound spiritual way in 2018. Make it the very best!

-Pastor Dennis Falasco

PROPERTY

Dear Members,

On behalf of the Property Committee, we are so grateful for your support this past year for all the Church Capital Projects undertaken. In that spirit, we also want the congregation to know who those fabulous contractors are:

Wilson Hall/Sanctuary/Hart Building Light Change Out: PG & E

Wilson Hall Kitchen Remodel: Bill Wilson (carpenter), Al DeCosta (appliances), Nate's Plumbing, Abbey Flooring, SLO Roto-Rooter

Wilson Hall Flooring: Anderson Flooring

Parking Lot Lighting: Steinar Svennungsen (Electrician and contractor)

Sanctuary Air Conditioning/Heating: Hutch Heating

Sanctuary Sound System: A-Town Audio Video

Wilson Hall/Office WiFi: Digital West (formerly Norcast)

Hart Building Facade Repair: A.D. Robinson (Plastering)

Hart Building/Sanctuary/Wilson Hall Painting: Brushworks

Church Parking Lot Paving: Edmunds Paving

Please understand these are all local business folks that did incredible, work for us. The Property Committee heartily endorses each one.

Graciously,
Property Brothers (John & Tim)
Church Property Committee

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

UPCOMING EVENTS

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY IN THE NEW YEAR, ESPECIALLY:

For the Rev. Dennis Falasco as he shepherds our congregation,
For our elders and deacons as they lead and guide us,
For Jen Rabenaldt and our Children's Ministry,
For all those involved in our Youth Ministry, especially leaders Ryan Joslin, Sarah Dirk, and Jake Wolfe,
For Joel Drenckpohl and the Front Porch Campus Ministry,

For those who are undergoing treatments for various health issues,
For our church's elderly, especially those confined to their homes or care centers, like Cathy Anderson, Charles Blair, Gladys Brannum, George Daniel, Jean Honeyman, Jeanne Hoyt, Lorna Hudson, Stella & Starr Jenkins, Marie Kammenzind, Hulda Nickel, Joy Reed, Idabelle Shields, Dottie Jean & John Stechman, Ernest Triebel, Carol West, and Richard & Lou Wiens,

For the women and men who do so much to support the countless ministries, missions, and activities of our church,
For the local and global missions our church supports,

For members and friends serving in the military:
Drew Descary (stationed at Los Angeles)
Laura Kraemer (attending Navy Medical School in MD)
Jim Shelton (deployed on an aircraft carrier)
Michael Poe (stationed in Florida)
Joseph Sall (son of Anne Ramirez; stationed in Carlisle, PA)
Travis Hatakeyama (grandson of the Luensers; stationed in Germany)
Brendan Humphrey (grandson of Leila & Bob; on Navy Aircraft Carrier)
R. Brooks Anderson (grandson of Dorothy Truesdale; on the USS North Dakota)

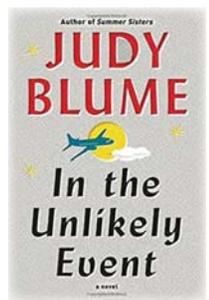
For all of us as we celebrate Christ's birth and serve God wherever He calls us.



BROWN BAG CONCERT

Friday, January 5 at 12 pm, hear songwriter/producer Phil Sillas sharing songs from his catalog as well as classic favorites. Phil has worked with Jimmy Webb, David Foster, Danny Gokey and is currently producing in San Luis Obispo. He is also the worship director at Rock Harbor Church in Morro Bay.

BOOK BROWSERS will meet on Tuesday, January 2 at 7:00 pm in the Library to discuss *My Wish List* by Gregoire Delacourt. Our book for February is *In the Unlikely Event* by Judy Blume. Questions? Contact Diane Shervem at 543-1473 or dshervem@charter.net.



EPIPHANY DINNER SLO Boats, a congregational social group, is having an Epiphany Dinner and Planning Meeting on Friday, January 5 at 6:00 pm in Wilson Hall. Please RSVP to Pam Rodewald if you are coming at psrmony@mac.com or (805) 215-2396. Hope you can join us for a delicious dinner planned by Evelyn Ruehr and Dave Bauer.

WINTER GRACE Winter Grace will be held on Saturday, March 10, 2018. We are working on getting some great presentations for you. If you have any suggestions let us know. We'd love to hear your ideas. YES, Eugenia Gamble will be our kick-off speaker! Contact Kay Emmons at 805-704-8315 or kay.l.emmons@gmail.com for more information.

ENDOWMENT

CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

Our Church's Endowment began in 1996 when Session acted to draw up an Endowment Fund for the receipt, management and use of certain restricted Church funds. Since 1999, our endowment fund has provided \$252,240 for church programs and goals, including missions, youth ministry, Christian education, worship & music, and general church operations.

A healthy endowment is proving vital to the long term success of our church. The December 2016 endowment total was \$503,265. Based on that, Session voted to allocate 4.0% or \$20,078. At the end of September 2017 the total has grown to \$528,265, boding well for a similar allotment early this year.

Our Endowment is invested with the Presbyterian Foundation. Now all the endowment is professionally managed and procedures are in place to distribute annually a judicious amount for the church's use, but always according to the terms of the original gift.

Some of the gifts now in the Endowment include, the **Holdsworth Bequest**, dated April 1950, which benefits Presbyterian Women's missions, the **McMillian Youth Fund** for youth ministry, the **Dorothy Wilson Memorial Endowment** for long term stewardship to the general fund, and the **Janet Brown Praise Choir Fund**, the latest, dated 2003. Some of these gifts were given to create memorials for a dear spouse. All of the gifts were made by donors who wanted to create a lasting legacy or to use the endowment to assure her or his continuing stewardship to this Church. They wanted to endow at least a portion of their pledge.

If you'd like to consider the gift of any type, please talk with a member of our church's Endowment Committee: John Eichler, Jerry Kaml, Jane Maxwell, Bert Townsend, Dorothy Trusedale, Roger Verity, & Virginia Walter.

Even a modest gift will make a difference.

STEWARDSHIP

Remember a year and a half ago we were thanking all of you for contributing nearly \$400,000 to our Capital Campaign to: Take Care of God's House?

The Bible tells us "it is in giving that we receive". We've now ALL been on the receiving end of those gifts with our modernized kitchen, a refinished Wilson Hall flooring, air conditioning, upgraded electronics, and Wi-Fi. Our Hart Building got repaired and painted plus the rest of the church and we have a repaved parking lot that came in under budget.

When Tim Smith, Steve Lumm, and I came to you and asked that you now Care for God's People, you stepped up to the plate once again with this year's Stewardship Pledge Drive. So, here's the good news! Last year at this time we had pledges totalling \$442,390 from 120 members. So far this year 125 of you have pledged \$513,642! Congratulations! Sixty members increased their pledges by \$69,492. (That's almost \$70K). Forty-three members stayed the same promising \$143,970. Just 5 members felt they had to reduce their pledges but only by \$3,420. Here's one more statistic. Checking in our church directory, over the last 2 years we've had 6 families move away and sadly, another 15 members have died. So you see that \$513,642 is really impressive!

We understand not everyone feels comfortable pledging. Some would rather just drop their donations in the offering plate. Believe me, those donations are equally welcomed and very important. Any extra dollars will go towards helping our dear Pastor get his long awaited assistant.

So, once again, congratulations!

Diane Blakeslee Brocato, Stewardship chair

FRONT PORCH

As this article is being written, the coffee house is closed and quiet as students are at home for a well-deserved break from school. If the walls, tables, and coffee cups could talk, what would they say? Do they miss the buzz and hum of many students greeting each other, catching up, making coffee, and plugging in their computers to study? Is the energy that comes from exclamations of cheer and a tense game of pool missed? How about the warmth generated by hugs between friends? (Lots of hugging goes on at Front Porch!) The life goes out of Front Porch when the students and staff are not filling the coffee house, library, and game room with their presence and the love of God. The walls, tables, and cups are waiting for the students to return to bring back the spirit of love that fills Front Porch and spills out into the campus and the community.

Stop by to feel that love any time. Contact Joel, Dom, or Ryan for a tour, or ask any of the council members from First Pres SLO: Valerie Evans, Tad Miller, Mary Blythe, or Susan Updegrave.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

Mary Butler: January 5

Dodie Williams: January 12 (85 this year)

To everyone else who has a January birthday!

If we have overlooked anyone, please contact the Church Office at 543-5451.

ADULT EDUCATION

The Adult Education Committee has been busy putting together plans for 2018. We are excited to share the first series with you. It is in honor of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Mark your calendars. Further information will be coming.

Jan. 28th- Martin Luther

Feb. 4- Erasmus

Feb. 11- Calvin and Knox

Feb. 18- Council of Trent

HOMELESS OVERFLOW

Well, construction of our new shelter at 40 Prado has taken longer than we had hoped. If any of you have built a home, or done a remodel, you know how that goes! So, we have the opportunity and blessing of sharing our space to providing safe, warm housing for women and families in our community.

FPC will be hosting the homeless overflow during the month of March and the first two weeks of April. Please look at your March plans and then look for us in the courtyard between services, starting January 28th. We will find a date that works for you.

Chaperones are especially needed starting March 16th. We believe you will find that what starts out as a sacrifice of one night in your own comfy bed in is transformed by sharing the radical hospitality of Christ. The overflow shelter cannot function without a large, loving, and dedicated number of chaperone volunteers. This will REALLY be our last year to be sheltering here at church, so let's finish off and fill all those evenings. We need you!

If you have any questions, please contact anyone on the Coordinating Team:

Tim and Margo Smith

544.6232 tamsmith@charter.net

Jackie and Ben Parker

555-7090 sloparker@gmail.com

Brian and Petra Patterson

544-2906 petrapatterson@sbcglobal.net

Steve and Mary Ann Brown

544-2256 sf81brown@charter.net



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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

FIRST SERVICE: 8:45 am

EDUCATION HOUR: 10 am

SECOND SERVICE: 11 am

Skilled Childcare Available