

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Stockton, CA

MARCH 1, 2026 - 11:00 a.m.

LENT 2026

WILDERNESS

I lift up my eyes to the hills — from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121: 1-2



OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

As God's family through Jesus Christ, we seek:

- *to know God through prayer, worship, and Bible study*
- *to be open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit*
- *to share God's love with each other, our community, and the world*

~GATHERING THE FAMILY OF GOD~

PRELUDE Frederic Chopin: Prelude #15 in D-flat Major "Raindrop" **DIEGO BUSTAMANTE**
(All are invited to enjoy the Prelude as part of our worship service. We request that voices are kept to a whisper to allow for a meditative atmosphere.)

CHORAL INTROIT

WELCOME

Rev. Ashley L. Skrabec

Lenten Grounding

One: Let us find one moment of stillness here in this moment, in this place. The world, with all of its trouble, will still be there when we return. Take a moment to breathe. As your breath fills your lungs, let us give thanks for air, for lungs, for the chemical processes that bring oxygen to each of our waiting cells. The Holy Spirit is here, as close as our breath, giving life to every corner of our being.

Take a moment to tap your feet on the ground. As you feel the solidness beneath your body, let us give thanks for all that holds us up, for the earth which is our home and the gravity which keeps us in balance. God the Creator is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Feel the forces of love and truth and connection for which you were made and let them stabilize you.

Take a moment and feel for your pulse. What a miracle that our hearts keep pumping faithfully, whether we are awake or asleep, whether we recognize it or not. Our hearts respond to our emotions, speeding up when we are excited or frightened and slowing as we relax. Just as we never had to ask our hearts to beat, we did not need to ask Jesus to be born into our weary world. Our Savior keeps time with us, leading our hearts to ache for what makes his ache, showing us the ways of love. Feel the presence of Jesus, who holds your heart.

Grounded in the grace of the divine, let us open our time of worship in song.

OPENING HYMN

Gather Us In

#401 vs. 1,3,4

Verse 1: Here in this place the new light is streaming; now is the darkness vanished away; see in this space our fears and our dreamings brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken; gather us in, the blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.

Verse 3: Here we will take the wine and the water; here we will take the bread of new birth.
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion; give us to eat the bread that is you; nourish us well, and teach us to fashion lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Verse 4: Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven, light years away; here in this place the new light is shining; now is the kingdom and now is the day. Gather us in and hold us forever; gather us in and make us your own; gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Call to Reconciliation

Janet Sepiol

One: Friends, there is much in this life that is out of our control, but all of us can take this moment to stop and reflect and pray. May our confession and lament be the soil of our healing, by which we are enveloped by the justice and mercy of Christ.

For when we have done wrong by what we have done and what we have left undone,
have mercy on us, O God.

For when we have insisted on our own way rather than to serve as Christ has served us,
have mercy on us, O God.

For our tendency to accumulate and hoard your good gifts, neglecting the joy and humility of sharing with others, **have mercy on us, O God.**

For humanity's divisions and public discourse which makes us believe that people who are like us matter and others do not, **have mercy on us, O God.**

For when our patterns of consumption have harmed the wellbeing of our neighbors and of creation, **have mercy on us, O God.**

For when all seems broken and we struggle to understand what you are doing or to place our trust in you, **have mercy on us, O God.**

One: Restore us, Jesus our Savior, that we would be light and salt. We want to be part of the solution, not the problem. We want to be people of grace, not of destruction. Transform the swords in our hearts to ploughshares that we might know your goodness within and without. May we be like trees planted by your everlasting stream, steady in drought and storm.

Let us spend a moment in silent reflection and prayer

A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

(This single minute of quiet is offered to encourage you to share your personal thoughts with God as well as listen to God through the presence of the Holy Spirit.)

Musical Assurance of Forgiveness: Be Still and Know That I am God #414

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God. (Repeat)

Passing of the Peace

Janet Sepiol

One: Let there not be strangers here, but friends and fellow travelers joined together by the God who knows each of us by name. May the peace of Jesus Christ our Messiah be with you all.

All: And also with you

One: Amen. What a gift it is to be together today. Let us greet each other with joy!

Song of Preparation

Create in Me A Clean Heart

#422

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

~Hearing God's Word~

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

Janet Sepiol

One: Holy Spirit, thank you for your word. Open our hearts and minds to hear what you are saying to us today.

Reading from the Psalms

Psalms 121

Janet Sepiol

One: The Word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**

Reading from the Gospels

John 3:1-17

Rev. Ashley L. Skrabec

One: The Word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**

Spiritual Practice - Asking Questions

1. What questions have you found yourself asking God, both in the past and now?
2. How have the questions you have asked shaped how you see yourself, the world, and Jesus?
How have they shaped your faith?

Reflection Song

There is a Longing in Our Hearts

#470 vs. 1-3

Refrain: There is a longing in our hearts, o Lord for you to reveal yourself to us
There is a longing in our hearts for love we only find in you, our God **x2**

Verse 1: For justice, for freedom, for mercy, hear our prayer. In sorrow, in grief, be near, hear our prayer, O God.

Verse 2: For wisdom, for courage, for comfort, hear our prayer. In weakness, in fear, be near, hear our prayer, O God.

Verse 3: For healing, for wholeness, for new life, hear our prayer. In sickness, in death, be near, hear our prayer, O God.

Sharing of the Lord's Supper

Joys and Concerns

LORD'S PRAYER (Please feel free to pray the words below or use the language of your heart.)

Our parent who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Offertory

Prayer of Dedication

~GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD~

Sending Hymn

In the Midst of New Dimensions

#315 vs. 1– 3

(All are invited to stand in body or spirit.)

Verse 1: In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways, who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways?

Refrain: God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, we your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and evermore.

Verse 2: Through the flood of starving people, warring factions and despair, who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care? **Refrain**

Verse 3: As we stand, a world divided by our own self-seeking schemes, grant that we, your global village, might envision wilder dreams.

BENEDICTION

Rev. Ashley L. Skrabec

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE Antonin Dvorak, arr. William Fisher: Going Home **Diego Bustamante**

(All are invited to enjoy the Postlude as part of our worship service. If you choose to leave during the Postlude, please do so silently.)

Church Meetings

This week:

Sunday - March 1, 2026

Family Promise starts

Monday - March 2, 2026

10:30am - Session Meeting

7:00pm Weekly Prayer Meeting on

Zoom: <http://us02web.zoom.us/j/83626879321>

Meeting ID: 836-2687-9321

Thursday - March 5, 2026

10:00pm - Bible Study (Geneva Room)

2:00-3:00pm - Book Club

Coffee hour and Potluck Schedule (set up, clean up)

Hospitality after Worship fellowship
schedule

March 1 - Tola Eley /Cheryl Hunt

March 8 - Carol Dietrich

March 15 - Sylvia Cavanaugh

March 22 -

March 29 - Jane Knoop

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

March 1 - Janet Sepiol

March 8 - Eleanor Lawrence

March 15 - Craig Holmes

March 22 - Carol Dietrich

March 29 (Palm Sunday) - Gail Herron

SUNDAY SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

March 1 - No Sunday School

March 8 - Melanie / Yeji Cha

March 15 - Melanie / Cynthia Alison

March 22 - Melanie / Tola Eley

March 29 -

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour

There will be no zoom coffee hour this



Scholarships Available

Memorial funds left in the name of the Bewley, Baumgardner, Lenz and Woods Families are available for scholarships for those in our church community pursuing higher education. High school seniors, students enrolled in a college, university or trade school, or re-entering adults are eligible to apply.

Please contact the office for information and an application form. Due date for completed applications is **May 1st**.



Easter Flower Dedication

Help us decorate the sanctuary for Easter!

If you would like to purchase Easter Flowers in honor of loved one, please use an order form which can be found on the blue room table.

Please return completed forms, along with your check or cash, in the offering plate or to the office no later than, Monday, March 31st



PLEASE SIGN UP WITH WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO BRING!



Family Promise
March 1-14, 2026
Begins this week

REQUESTED PRAYERS

The Church Office and members of the church receive several prayer requests each week.

Please pray for:

- Karen Keene requests prayers for her and Tom as they navigate options for his care.
- Cheryl Hunt asked prayers for Rev. Diego as he travels to Bogata' for relief from severe debilitating back injuries.
- Prayers of gratitude that Cheryl's brother Kevin is able to return home, and prayers that he can continue the long recovery with hope.
- Jerry requested prayers for his nephew Nick and his wife and their baby Bella.
- Shalise requested prayers for her daughter's friend Maria and her new baby boy.
- Rosalie asked for prayers for her friend Kathy, who has been receiving treatment for cancer, as she received news that she has a new cancer diagnosis. Prayers for healing, comfort and peace, and for her and for her elderly dog as they live alone.
- Pastor Ashley asked for prayers for justice and peace for all how live in areas of danger, conflict and injustice.
- Shalise requests prayer for her son, for the communication between employees and managers at her job, and for her house as they welcome two new ladies.
- Sheryl requests prayers for her partner Lee as he faces medical challenges.
- Radi asked for continued prayers for her son Sid. She also shared a joy that her granddaughter, Marcia just graduated from the nursing program while serving in the U S Airforce, and asked for prayers for a successful and rewarding life for her.
- Mara requested prayers for reconciliation for Stockton's mayor and city manager
- Pastor Ashley asked for prayers of protection and peace for people of Sudan and all over the world where there is violence and injustice.
- We pray for all those who are on H1B visas and their families as they are shaken by potential changes to their immigration status.
- Pastor Ashley requests prayer for all asylum-seekers and immigrants who are living in fear and for all who have been detained or deported without due process.

If you have a prayer request, please contact the Church Office or Pastor Ashley. Joys and concerns are added to the prayer list of the people who have signed up to be members of the WE CARE PRAYER TEAM. If you would like to be a part of the WE CARE PRAYER TEAM, contact Cheryl Hunt or call the Church Office.

First Presbyterian Church of Stockton

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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9am -12 pm

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Board of Elders (Session)

Gretchen Louden, Sylvia Cavanaugh, Cheryl Hunt, Janet Sepiol, and Jane Knoop

Committee Chairs

Spiritual Growth - Gretchen Louden

Support & Endowment - Janet Sepiol and Jane Knoop

Finance, Buildings & Grounds - Doug Hunt

Nominating - Jane Knoop

Hospitality - Cheryl Hunt and Sylvia Cavanaugh

Personnel - Janet Sepiol

Clerk of Session - Janet Sepiol

Pastor - Rev. Ashley Love Skrabec

Ministers—all the members of the church

First Presbyterian Church is committed to loving and serving all people, including those from diverse generations, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, and life experiences. Whatever your story, you are welcomed by Jesus Christ and by this church family.

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