



**NEW WORSHIP SERVICE TIME
11:00AM BEGINS SUNDAY APRIL 3**

PASTOR ASHLEY'S MESSAGE

"...hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." Romans 5:5

Stockton is in bloom! Green leaves and vibrant blossoms of all shades are returning to our city. The miracle of spring emerges each year and dares us to hope that new life can come from the earth yet again. This is my first spring as a homeowner, and I am developing a working relationship with the plants in my front and back yards. I have been amazed at the resiliency and speed with which they grow and recover (especially the weeds, of course). There is something both comforting and humbling about the life processes that are happening all around us, regardless of our efforts or attention. It reminds me that God is always doing new things, bringing life in ways I see and don't see.

It makes me think of Jesus' disciples after the crucifixion, their teacher and friend hidden from their eyes. Their world had been turned upside down and their hopes for who Jesus would be were buried with Him in the tomb. Despite their lack of understanding and independent of their efforts, the miracle of the resurrection came. Jesus Christ could not be held by death, and when He rose from the grave it was clear that life will always have the final word in our reality, whether on this side of heaven or the next. We can hope even when life surprises and confounds us because we believe that God has made a way regardless of our awareness and understanding. What a joy that we get to respond, bear witness, and be enlivened by the Holy Spirit to participate in this wondrous truth. By God's great mercy in Jesus Christ, new life rises keeps coming.

One of the things I hear often these days is that people are broken down by this pandemic and the violence which plagues our world. We are understandably weary after the past couple of years. It can seem like hope is not only foolish, but a risky endeavor when so often we are disappointed and heartbroken. I have to admit that when the leaves begin returning to trees this year, I didn't feel quite ready. It didn't seem right for things to be beautiful when there had been so much pain. Winter is always a good companion for lament, after all. And yet, the leaves came, followed by almond and cherry blossoms, and irises unfolding proudly. Our first sunflowers have shown their faces here on the church campus. The plants didn't care much for my readiness, it seems. Independent from our efforts and without our permission, life defiantly blooms and bears witness to the God who loves us right where we are but strengthens us to hope for more.

Over the past couple of years, our confident predictions of the future have been largely taken from us. This experience has exposed where our hope was based on our ability to understand and control our lives. If our ability to understand and control our lives was the source of our hope, we would have a hard time keeping it afloat during this pandemic. But what if our hope was in something else? What if our hope was in God, the giver of all life, who faithfully brings forth the colors of spring whether or not we notice? What if our confidence was in the Savior who surprised the world on that resurrection morning by overcoming sin and death? Dear ones, though we cannot predict the future, may we live in the assurance that life will faithfully blossom to meet us with hope, encouragement, and new paths to explore as we follow Jesus Christ.

Blessings and Prayers,
Rev. Ashley Love

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Adam Yanes	April 4
Ron Allison	April 8
Elizabeth Alessio	April 12
Ramon Bacerra	April 13
Eleanor Lawrence	April 28

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## APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

|                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| Cheryl & Doug Hunt     | April 2 |
| Eleanor & Bob Lawrence | April 2 |

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FOOD PANTRY

We are so grateful for the support we receive for our food pantry. We now feed over 80 people every week!

We are always in need of your reusable plastic bags or other types of totes that you no longer use. We often put together a meal bag for those who visit the pantry and bags are always in high demand as our patrons shop for their food.

During April, we hope you will bring in small bags of chips (lunch size) that can be used in the food pantry as well as the daily food bags given to the homeless that come to the office door. Your contributions help us have a variety of items.

We are constantly being blessed with surprise donations from other organizations and individuals. And more and more people are putting prayers on the prayer board and praying with Pastor Ashley.

As the food pantry continues to grow, we are in need of more volunteers. If you have time, or know someone who might be interested, please contact me or Suzi.

Tola Eley

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## READERS-R-US

For April, Book Club will be reading *The Department of Rare Books and Special Collections* by Eva Jurczyk. If you'd like to attend, please contact Janet Sepiol.

## GOT SILVER?

Many of us own silver services that are sitting in our cupboards that we no longer use and that no one in our family is interested in owning. If you fit into this category, please consider donating your silver to First Pres. We are collecting silver to sell to help offset some of the budget deficit.



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ACTS BIBLE STUDY RETURNS

Our study of the Book of Acts returns on Tuesday, April 26, at 7:00, via Zoom. See Kim Roider for more information.

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## ACCESS FPC WORSHIP VIDEOS

To access our worship services online, go to our website: [fpcstockton.org](http://fpcstockton.org), click on Ministries, then Worship, and click on the YouTube logo. You'll automatically be directed to FPC's YouTube channel.

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HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Maundy Thursday—11am—worship and study of the Last Supper, followed by a brown bag lunch. Beverages and desserts will be provided.

Good Friday—5pm—Joint service at Trinity Presbyterian, 1102 W. 8th St. We will be partnering with Trinity Presbyterian for our Good Friday service. Carpools will meet at FPC at 4:30pm. Please contact the Church Office if you would like to carpool.

Easter Sunday—11:00am—Join us for a joyful celebration of the resurrection, including a flowering of the cross. There will be an Easter Egg Hunt in Callistro Park following worship. If you would like to help out our Easter Bunny, please bring filled eggs and hide them in Callistro Park prior to our service.



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## CONGREGATIONAL CARE

April ushers in not only warmer weather, but also changes to First Pres this year. We look forward to our new Sunday service time of 11:00 a.m., and hopefully an in-person coffee time following – and maybe we can even forgo our masks! We did celebrate the church's birthday on March 20<sup>th</sup> with coffee and cupcakes (thank you Tami Buckley). A glimpse of things to come.

The church is also in the planning stages of helping Family Promise prepare some of Stockton's homeless families with a place to stay while securing a permanent home. We will house a couple of families on our campus for one week and provide them with dinner. If you would like to help us in this mission, please contact the church office, Cheryl Hunt, or Sylvia. We will be doing this 4 times a year as will other churches in our area. It is a wonderful way to share God's love at First Presbyterian Church.

We also ask for prayers and cards for a couple of our members. Frances Mendez-McPherson is still house bound and recovering from foot problems, but doing better. Jane Knoop has finally been able to drive to church after eye surgery, and we welcome her back. Mary Lou Hover is recovering from a broken ankle at Meadowood Rehab Facility. Please pray for her as well as Don, who is anxiously awaiting her return home.

If you know of someone in our congregation who needs help with supplies or rides (to Dr. or pharmacy, etc.) or just some cheering up, please call Sylvia (209-931-2678) or Suzi in the office.

May God grant us and the whole world His Mercy and Peace.

Peace,  
Sylvia

## NURSERY SECURITY CAMERA

In an effort to implement our safety policy (see insert), a security camera has been installed in our Nursery.

## SESSION UPDATE MARCH MEETING

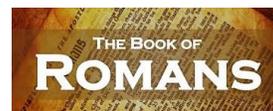
Session met on Sunday, March 20th. Items that were discussed included:

- Reality will be moving their service to Sunday mornings. Starting April 3, the Reality service will be at 9:00AM, and ours will be at 11:00AM
- John Vaughn is leading the Lenten study at 6:30PM on Tuesdays at church
- Pastor Ashley and Pastor Melissa of Trinity Presbyterian will be leading a joint Good Friday service at 5PM at Trinity.
- For Maundy Thursday, the Thursday Bible Study Group is inviting everyone to come at 11AM for study, lunch and Communion. Bring your own lunch and the group will provide drinks and dessert.
- The parking lot will be resurfaced and striped May 2 and 3.
- Family Promise will be here the week of May 8.

If you have questions, please speak to a Session member or Pastor Ashley.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Session meeting packet, please let Suzi know.

## LENTEN BIBLE STUDY



John Vaughn's study of the Book of Romans continues through April 12th, in-person in the

Geneva Room at 6:30pm. If you have questions, please see John.

## VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR NEW TIME

Please join us for Coffee Hour via Zoom at 1:00pm on Sundays. The meeting ID number is 879 5305 9034 or you can call in using the number 669-900-9128 and put in the meeting ID number just like a conference call. This information is also emailed every week.

First Presbyterian Church of Stockton  
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Stockton, CA 95202  
Phone: 209-465-2653  
Email: office@fpcstockton.org  
Website: fpcstockton.org  
Business Office Hours:  
Monday-Thursday, 8:00am-1:00pm

The deadline for submission  
of articles for the  
May Window is  
**April 20th.**

#### **WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

|          |                         |
|----------|-------------------------|
| April 3  | Gail Herron             |
| April 10 | The Hunts (Palm Sunday) |
| April 17 | Sue McCormack (Easter)  |
| April 24 | Sylvia Cavanaugh        |

#### **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*