



## **PASTOR ASHLEY'S MESSAGE**

Recently I reflected on what was happening at this point last year. This time last year, we were worshipping online and I was broadcasting the service on my laptop all over the church campus. Our Worship Assistants were faithfully sending in their parts they had recorded in their homes or gardens. We were led into worship with prerecorded vocal and instrumental pieces from John Vaughn and our choir, and sang along with lyric videos made by Earl Roider, featuring Ethan Albala playing piano and a variety of instruments. The peace of Christ was passed through videos of our community members, as well as a through texts and the chat on YouTube.

As I look back, my heart is filled with encouragement, wonder, and gratitude. In the midst of a year that was breaking our hearts and stretching our patience in a thousand different ways, we were able to lean on each other and continue to be the church together. While we would have never chosen to go through COVID-19 (and may still have some strong words to God about it), First Pres held tightly to each other and to Jesus Christ. We learned again that we are a body of many members, knit together by God's grace as we share our unique gifts. None of us could have done it alone and as always, I am so very thankful to be part of this congregation and honored to be your pastor.

During those months when we did not meet in person, our campus was maintained with the hope and faith that one day it would again be filled with life and worship. Currently we are experiencing a joyful uptick in that usage, with Reality Church worshipping in our Sanctuary on Sunday afternoons and using our classrooms for their children's ministry. We were a polling place for the recent election and will host COVID-19 vaccine clinics in October and November. Koinonia Hall has continued to be used by local groups for basketball, and we are so excited to welcome All Saints Academy who will be using our court for their youth league. Koinonia Hall also houses our food pantry, which is now being managed by our church as we rethink and revamp this ministry.

One of the things I am most thankful for when I look back is that we have been able to continue to pay our staff throughout the past year and a half. A big part of our resilience can be traced to the dedication of Suzi our Office Manager, Vic our Custodian, Cindy our Bookkeeper, John our Choir Director, Ethan our Accompanist, and Kelly our Nursery Attendant who has pivoted to help keep the campus clean and ready for use when we came back in person. We are truly blessed with these partners that God has brought into our church community.

During October you will be hearing about stewardship as we are asking for our church and community members to pledge their giving for 2022. These pledges give your church leaders a sense of our budget for the coming year. I highlight the blessing of our staff and our building because, along with our support of mission partners, these are the largest portions of our budget each year. While it is not always exciting to talk about paychecks and building maintenance, insurance, and upkeep, these parts of our budget support our congregation's life in so many exciting and life-giving ways.

As a part of our community, it is important that you know we were already in a tough place financially, and this year has seen a decline in giving for a variety of reasons. For over a decade, First Presbyterian Church has been using our support and endowment funds to make up the difference between what we spend and what we receive. Operating at a deficit is not sustainable and as we take stock of where we are and pray for guidance as to where Christ is leading us for this season of the church, your pledge helps your church leaders to discern and steward our resources.

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## CHANGE IN SUNDAY SERVICE TIME

Our worship services return to 10:30am on Sunday, October 3rd.

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**VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR**

Because worship has returned to 10:30am, Coffee Hour via Zoom has moved to noon. We hope you can join us. The meeting ID number is 862 6004 7427 or you can call in using the number 669-900-9128 and put in the meeting ID number just like a conference call.

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**OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS**

Ruth Strombom	October 9
Richard McKee	October 11
Connor McKee	October 18
Cynthia Allison	October 20
Sydney Buckley	October 21
Beverly Hedburg	October 23

**OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES**

Bill & Tami Buckley	October 10
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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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**STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN**

In October Stewardship Committee reminds us of the role of First Church as a proclaimer of the Gospel, a worker in the community and a source of support for the people in Stockton.

There is a physical plant to attend, staff, utilities . . . all to facilitate the proclamation of the Good News, studying and teaching the Bible and visiting the sick. We also look outside our doors to our neighbors, welcoming them into our fellowship and supporting those who need more than a welcome.

We urge members and friends of First Presbyterian Church to remind ourselves that your financial support is so important in continuing our goals of proclamation, assistance and engagement.

## CONGREGATION CARE

The Congregational Care Committee continues to serve our congregation as we hear of needs. The COVID virus has once again caused us to restrict our gatherings and services, but with masks and social distancing we are still meeting. We hope you can join us in the sanctuary, or on YouTube ([fpcstockton.org](http://fpcstockton.org)).

We have taken over the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet from Restore. The Food Pantry is currently closed for reorganization. Watch your email for details about reopening. If you know of anyone in need of clothing or food, or if you would like to be involved in helping others in our community with this project, please call the Church Office for more information.

A couple of our members have recently suffered trauma. Joy Panzer was involved in an automobile accident and is recovering at Meadowood (O'Connor Woods). Charlie Briggs was attacked near his apartment in downtown Stockton, suffered a concussion. Our thoughts and prayers for a speedy recovery goes out to them both.

If you know of anyone in our congregation that may need some help or visits, please call me (931-2678) or the Church Office (465-2653).

God Bless you all,  
Sylvia Cavanaugh, Chair

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**CONTINUING OUR CONVERSATION  
ABOUT GUN SAFETY;  
PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE**



We hope you will join us on Sunday, October 10, 2021, following worship. Snacks will be available. Thoughts and prayers have led us to this...but they are not enough. If you are interested in helping past or future victims of gun violence heal you are welcome to this conversation. Everyone is welcome... if you are a member of the community, if you are a member of First Pres or any church. Trust us: It is not about restricting gun ownership.

## FALL FPC COMMUNITY GARDEN

We've all heard that a Mediterranean Diet is good for you. An important component of the Mediterranean Diet is plenty of vegetables. Well, it's not too early to be thinking about fresh veggies from your own Winter vegetable garden.

A Winter Garden can be planted after the first of October when the daytime temperatures start to moderate. It should do well through the Spring.

There are so many Winter veggies: Carrots, beets, spinach, all kinds of lettuces, chard, arugula, parsley, broccoli, kale, collards, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and cabbage, leeks, peas, snow peas, onions, and fava beans to name a few. Broccoli will keep producing tender side shoots (good for stir-fry) even after the main head is removed. Lettuce, too, will keep producing if you only remove the outer leaves.

Seeds of carrots, beets, spinach, and lettuces can be planted, but because the irrigation emitters are spaced about 8 inches apart, you will probably have to hand water regularly in order to assure germination. Once the rains come and the ground stays continuously moist, watering is usually not an issue.

We have some beds right here at FPC for those who enjoy growing their own produce. If you are interested in adopting a bed or portion of a bed, or have questions, please contact Craig Holmes (601-1040; holmescdm@aol.com) or leave a note with our Office Manager, Suzi.

### READERS-R-US

In October, Readers-R-U's book club will be reading *The Paris Library* by Janet Skeslien Charles. Please call Kathy White or Janet Sepiol if you'd like to attend the October meeting.

## SESSION UPDATE SEPTEMBER MEETING

Here are the items that were approved at the September Session meeting:

- There will be a Congregational meeting for the purpose of electing Elders, Nominating Committee, and Support and Endowment Committee members on November 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The COVID 19 Vaccination Clinic was canceled by the providers.
- Finance, Buildings and Grounds will develop a contract with Reality Church.
- The food pantry will now be under our management. Tola Eley and Suzi Treganza to organize volunteers.
- A pull-out church school for children will begin October 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- The Stewardship Campaign will begin October 3<sup>rd</sup> with a dedication of pledges on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

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.

### BIBLE STUDY RETURNS

Our study of the book of Acts will resume on Tuesday, October 5th, at 6:30pm, via Zoom. We will begin with Acts 7, "Stephen Addresses the Council." Watch your email for the Zoom logon information.



### CENTS-ABILITY



Start collecting your change! It's Cents-Ability time again.

Cents-Ability is a small first step in the battle against hunger and poverty. Everyone is invited to take part. This simple act is an expression of thanks for what we have received. It is also a commitment to share with others in response to Jesus' command "You give them something to eat." On Sunday, October 24th, we will collect your offerings in church and all of those coins "make a joyful noise unto the Lord" as they are received and dedicated.

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We cannot predict what this next year will bring any more than those dear saints worshipping online a year ago could have predicted this day, but we know that God is faithful and the Holy Spirit leads and strengthens us in all seasons. As we consider stewardship this month, I invite you to join in as we partner in the ministry of this church family and consider how Jesus Christ is leading us in faith.

Blessings to you, beloved of God!  
Pastor Ashley



**SAVE THE DATE**—November 21st, immediately following worship.

The deadline for  
submission of articles for  
the  
November Window is  
**October 20th.**

### **WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

|            |                    |
|------------|--------------------|
| October 3  | Gail Herron        |
| October 10 | Doug & Cheryl Hunt |
| October 17 | Charlie Briggs     |
| October 24 | Craig Holmes       |
| October 31 | Gretchen Loudon    |

### **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*