



Sharing the Love of Christ
First United Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
PO Box 37
1000 Douglas Avenue
Las Vegas New Mexico 87701

NOVEMBER 2023

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Dear FUPC Family and Friends,

I write this letter following the Cornerstone Chorale and Brass concert, which FUPC co-sponsored, and which was held at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church. What a beautiful program and what a wonderful opportunity for those of us who hosted musicians! Having the chance to enjoy the concert and then to have time getting to know some of the performers was a delight, at least for D.R. and me. It was also a lot of hard work to make the preparations, so thank you to everyone who worked to make this event a success!

I was struck during the concert with words spoken by the narrators—Cornerstone's Carle Atwater and local narrator Brett Gilland—and thought of them juxtaposed to Adrienne Rich's poem "In Those Years." Both remind us how important it is to think in terms of "we" rather than of "I."

A woman I know sums up the failure of her marriage by saying her spouse "couldn't think married;" that is, couldn't put "we" before "I." Family social workers I know often say the biggest reason children are separated from parents is that the parents are unable to think first of their children; again, the "I" gets in the way of the "we." And of course we hear the same message from pulpits and from Scripture; it is the message of love, because love empowers our ability to think for the good of "we."

In Those Years by Adrienne Rich

In those years, people will say, we lost track
of the meaning of we, of you
we found ourselves
reduced to I
and the whole thing became
silly, ironic, terrible:
we were trying to live a personal life
and yes, that was the only life
we could bear witness to

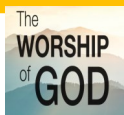
But the great dark birds of history screamed and plunged
into our personal weather
They were headed somewhere else but their beaks and pinions
drove
along the shore, through the rags of fog
where we stood, saying I

And from the Narrator's lines from the Cornerstone Chorale and Brass concert:

"What is most important is that a person is capable of loving. It is perhaps the only glimpse we are permitted of eternity. . . Life without love is death. There only is life where there is love.' [Mahatma Gandhi, 1869-1948]" . . .
"We are called to join Jesus in his mission to reconcile *all* people . . . to each other; to help the least of his brothers and sisters meet their physical needs; and to confront and condemn the powers of this world that deny dignity to *any* human being.' [John M. Good, Episcopal priest, 1938-2013 ...]"

May we work always to honor the "we" we can be.

With thanks for all of you,
Pastor Katie



WORSHIP TIDBITS

We will continue looking at “Insights into God’s Economy” through November 12. Readings include Isaiah 5:1-7 and 11:1-5 on November 5 and 2 Kings 22:1-10 and 23:1-3 on November 12.

In response to ideas voiced at the Congregational Retreat in September, we will be trying some different ideas in worship over the coming weeks. Some will be subtle, others more obvious. Know that feedback is always welcome! In keeping with the summer’s success of inviting church family members into the pulpit, members of the Sunday morning class will take to the pulpit on November 19!

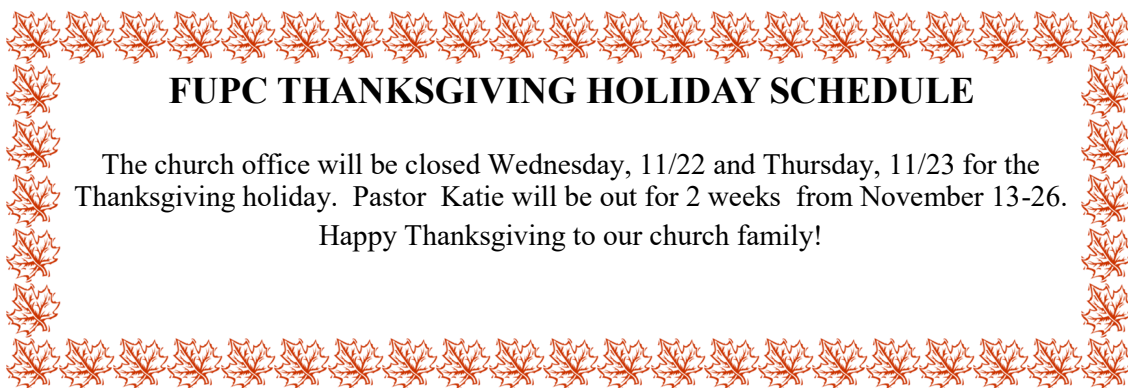
The season of Advent arrives on December 3 (how can it almost be Advent???). Our Advent theme, “Growing into Fullness,” will invite us to explore how God shapes us as we travel our spiritual journeys. As we move into this season, anticipating once again the birth of the Christ child, I encourage you to think about the ways in which God has shaped you and continues to shape you through your relationship with the Holy One.



THANKYOUTHANKYOUTHANKYOU

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Cornerstone Chorale and Brass Concert. A special thank-you goes to Karyl Lyne and Bonnie Bolton, who did much planning over the summer while Pastor Katie was on sabbatical. Thank you to Bonnie, who planned dinner for the musicians and to the cooking crew: Bonnie, Karyl, Murl Baker, Nina Marquez-Johns, and D.R. Palmer. Thank you to Brett Gilland, who served as our local narrator. Thank you to the host families, who provided fellowship, beds, and breakfasts to the musicians. Thank you to the concert volunteers, who served as ushers: Karyl, D.R., and Deb Allen-Reid. Thank you to Fr. Rob Yaksich and Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church for hosting the event, and to FUPC and St. Paul’s Peace Church for providing financial support. Thank you to Jordan Jones, who loaned the keyboard for the concert..

THANKYOUTHANKYOUTHANKYOU



FUPC THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The church office will be closed Wednesday, 11/22 and Thursday, 11/23 for the Thanksgiving holiday. Pastor Katie will be out for 2 weeks from November 13-26.

Happy Thanksgiving to our church family!

NEWS FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF SANTA FE



9:00-9:30	Registration & Fellowship		
9:30-10:45 <i>Session 1</i>	Church Finance Workshop	Personnel Ministry- Planning & preparing for Short-term Leaves	Keeping Presbyterian History in the Southwest
10:50-12:05 <i>Session 2</i>	Creating Safe Church Policies	Managing Mental Health Concerns in the Church	Sacred ADVENTures
12:05- 1:00	Lunch		
1:00-2:30	Closing Worship Reflections on Sacred Encounters from the Native Lands Travel Study Seminar		

Saturday, November 4th at 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

Albuquerque, First Presbyterian Church

Join us for this year's Education event offering a variety of workshop options for church leaders. Lunch will be served with a suggested donation of \$10.

Register by October 30th.



Donations will be received through the Presbytery of Santa Fe:

- Checks can be mailed to Presbytery of Santa Fe, 217 Locust St NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87102. Indicate Medical Debt Relief in the memo.

Electronic payment (debit, credit, or PayPal) can be made at https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=GGGX9M9SCQWGW

To count toward this year's contribution, please send donations by December 18th.

HOPE IS THE FIRST STEP

Hope is an Action Item was the topic of the presentation given by Carol Linder and me, on Sunday, Oct. 22. Wrapping one's head around this idea is perhaps easier if, as Carol pointed out in her sermon, you look at the definition of hope: confidence, expectation, optimism, and anticipation. With these tools, hope is transferred into action.

Part of the presentation was a journaling exercise based on scripture, similar to what we did during our summer renewal *Tracking the Word, Embodying the Spirit*. The Prayer for Illumination illustrates another way one can use scripture for creative expression. For this exercise, I encourage you to read the scriptures, and then personalize your response to each in your *Tracking the Word, Embodying the Spirit* journal by inserting your name in the reflection you write. The prompts are my reflections and are meant only as examples.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Based on Psalm 56:3 – Whenever I'm afraid, I put my trust in you...

When fear becomes a driving force
I sometimes seek dark places
and avoid the Light,
places where it is close, confining.
Places where the voices I hear
are the voices of
—doom and gloom.

The Light that is Christ is all around,
but fear hustles me
into that dark space.
There I will be hidden,
and I think – safe.
It is the great deceit.
In that dark space,
the voice of fear gets louder,
faith gets smaller.
Only in the Light that is Christ
can the deceiver be exposed;
only in the Light that is Christ can I find
hope and healing, faith and renewal.

In this time, Lord, open our hearts and minds to the LIGHT of your words and the message that Hope is an action item.
Amen

REFLECTIONS ON *HOPE IS AN ACTION ITEM*

Jeremiah 29:11

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

Journal prompt

I, Sharon, hope for renewed energy and will apply that energy in keeping with the gifts God has given me.

Romans 12:12

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Journal prompt

I, Sharon, rejoice that we as a church family face challenging times with hope as we continually pray for wisdom and guidance.

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Journal prompt

I, Sharon, see hope fulfilled by turning challenges into opportunities to serve God by serving others.

Isaiah 40:31

But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Journal prompt

I, Sharon, await with anticipation what God has in mind for me trusting he will renew my strength and inspire my creativity.

Submitted by Sharon Vander Meer

HOPE IS AN ACTION ITEM



On Oct. 22, 2023 Sharon Vander Meer and Carol Linder led a service with a sermon titled *Hope is an Action Item*. Trained as a cell biologist who used mice to study male infertility, Carol used her message to follow up on her sermon delivered on Aug. 6, titled *The Golgi Complex: The Ultimate Tracker*

Hope is defined by Merriam Webster in a series of action phrases:

to cherish a desire with anticipation

to want something to happen or be true

to desire with expectation of obtainment or fulfillment

to expect with confidence

Carol reminded everyone that who we are and what we look like is a combination of our genes and our environment. Who we are as First United Presbyterian Church is a consequence both of who we are as individuals, and groups of individuals, and our environment. We are guided by the needs of our community, our worship experience, chance happenings, mission projects both local and global, and scriptures to answer God's call. Many now feel unable to participate in the life of the church in the same manner as in previous years because of age, concern about COVID, or other limitations but these same individuals have found new ways to give of their time, treasures, and talents. Our church has continued to thrive despite challenges by acting on Hope.

A basic tenet of genetics is that mutations in our DNA may lead to a loss of function (e.g., male infertility) or a gain of function (e.g., Cancer). However, humans (and mice) have developed ways to adapt and survive despite changing circumstances. Over the last several years we have experienced many losses and changes within our congregation and local community. We now need to consider how we will react to these changes, and what tracks we will choose to follow.

Our summer 2023 renewal experience, *Tracking the Work, Embodying the Spirit* provided both inspiration and tools to determine how we as a church may continue as a thriving congregation able to fulfill God's plan for us. In September, more than 20 of us gathered for a retreat to share our impressions and reflect on our time of renewal. Working in small groups with Pastor Katie's call we developed a list of actions we would like to see continue or be incorporated into the life of our church or our worship service, based on our summer experiences. Many of the ideas generated at the retreat have already been incorporated into our Sunday morning worship service (more singing, streaming the worship service in Perea Hall, singing some parts of the liturgy, changing the order of worship, and participatory worship). Others ideas include looking for someone(s) with a Gain of Function mentality to help us transform these ideas into Hope in action.

Ideas of HOPE in Action generated at the retreat

If you missed the service, you can find recordings of the worship services at <https://www.lvpresbyterian.org/worship-service-recordings-2/>

HOPE in Action

- ✓ Continue with activities that were important to us
- ✓ Reschedule the canceled workshops
- ✓ Sing more in worship, especially songs that we can pick up quickly. Songs with movements!
- ✓ We were more comfortable inviting others to worship when it was this amazing
- ✓ Worship in the round/on the floor more welcoming
- ✓ Interest groups rising out of workshops.
- ✓ Two traditional services per month and two non-traditional. With creative types of sermons
- ✓ Participatory worship

HOPE in Action

- Something that can makes us uncomfortable.
- Outdoor service in Pavilion behind Stella's
- Adding a hymn or singing parts of the liturgy
- More scripture with dramatic
- New ways of worship will work if offerors are confident. 18 minutes of silence worked because of Nikki's confidence.
- Creating partnerships with people outside of church and give awareness to their service
- Using this space for arts and media. Art gallery!
- Regular potlucks opened with prayer.

HOPE in Action

- ❖ Ecumenical gatherings: Meals, lunches dinners, inviting different faiths. Rotate the location. Progressive dinner!?
- ❖ Learning something new in the service (like Lord's Prayer in Spanish) was engaging.
- ❖ Have overflow screen/speakers on for kitchen workers.
- ❖ One person's worship is another's entertainment.
- ❖ Changing the order of service to make it not so rote.
- ❖ An occasional guest preacher would shake things up.
- ❖ Sunday possibility of choirs and other music groups in the afternoon.
- ❖ Service at Old Town Mission.



THE THEOLOGIES OF BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN ARE FOOD FOR DISCUSSION

The Sunday morning class for adults and youth is discussing the book *The Grace of God and the Grace of Man: The Theologies of Bruce Springsteen* by Azzan Yadin-Israel, in a series that will break for Thanksgiving and Advent and pick up after the first of the year.

The author is professor of Jewish Studies and Classics at Rutgers University. His most recent book is *Temptation Transformed: The Story of How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple*.

Eileen Chapman and Eileen Reinhard of the University of Chicago Divinity School wrote, “Evident throughout Springsteen’s recording career is a searcher’s discourse on “religion” versus “faith.” In his songs, he is a representative lost soul seeking, and finding, authentic things of the spirit not wholly defined, or contained, by the Catholic Church.

“Springsteen’s first album [contains] the first recorded evidence ... for the recurring role that his Catholic upbringing would play in his lyrics. There are mentions of Jesus and Mary, nuns and priests, angels and devils, sinners and saints, and even the Vatican.”

They quote from Springsteen’s autobiography: “I don’t often participate in my religion, but I know somewhere... deep inside... I’m still on the team,” Springsteen observes. “This is the world where I found the beginning of my song. In Catholicism, there existed the poetry, the danger and darkness that reflected my imagination and my inner self. I found a land of great and harsh beauty, of fantastic stories, of unimaginable punishment and infinite reward.”

The book is only available in paperback. The cost plus shipping can be as low as \$12.01 (from Alibris). It is \$12.12 from AbeBooks and \$16 from Amazon. Some used copies are available for slightly less. Richard Lindeborg can order a copy sent from Amazon to your address with no shipping charge. The songs are available on Youtube.com and elsewhere on the internet.

Reading and song assignments for November sessions

Nov. 5 Chapter 1, The Sacred Profaned, pp. 33-49

“It’s Hard to be a Saint in the City” (*Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*) 1973

“Lost in the Flood” (*Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*) 1973

“Mary Queen of Arkansas” (*Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*) 1973

“If I was the Priest” (not the real title)

Nov. 12 Chapter 2, The Profane Sanctified, pp. 50-63

“Does this Bus Stop at 82nd Street?” (*Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*) 1973

“Spirit in the Night” (*Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*) 1973

“Resurrection”

“Thunder Road” (*Born to Run*) 1975

“Night” and “Born to Run” (*Born to Run*) 1975

Nov. 19 Chapter 3, Toward the Apocalypse, pp. 65-71

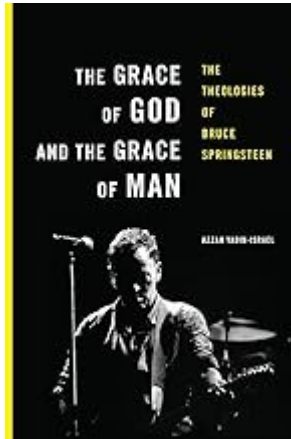
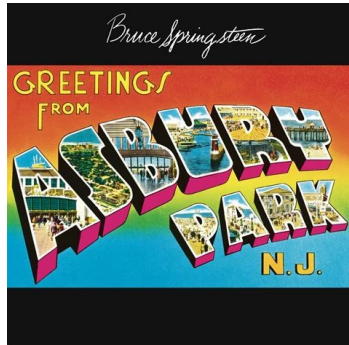
“Something in the Night” (*Darkness on the Edge of Town*) 1978

“Candy’s Room” (*Darkness on the Edge of Town*) 1978

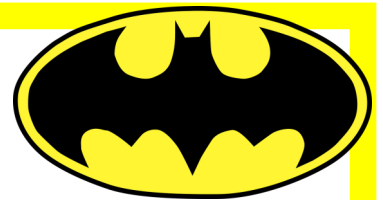
“The Iceman” (*Tracks*) 1998 compilation

“The Price You Pay” (*The River*) 1980

For a listing of the songs and albums covered in all Seven chapters or the lyrics for any week's songs, send an email to RALindeborg@cs.com.



HOLY DISRUPTION, BATMAN!



Are you telling me that there's an Advent message in the Gospel of Mark???

Plan to join Katie and D.R. Palmer this Advent/Christmas season for a discussion of the book *Holy Disruption: Discovering Advent in the Gospel of Mark* by Tracy S.

Daub. Daub is an experienced pastor who has also served as a seminar leader on faith and culture in Tanzania and El Salvador. According to theologian Brian McLaren, this book "will . . . bring Jesus and his gospel into clear focus. Christmas will never be the same for you again." From the back cover of the book:

Where's the baby? The Gospel of Mark doesn't have a nativity story—so where's the Advent message? It's in every aspect of Jesus' life, to his death and beyond.

The incarnation—God's coming to earth in human form to be baptized, teach, heal, eat, and die—is what we celebrate at Christmas, and Mark shows us just how radical and celebration worthy it is!

Holy Disruption presents a fresh understanding of the holiness of Christmas grounded not in a conventional, cozy Christmas message but through Mark's disquieting Gospel, which invites its readers to experience God's disruptive but transformative love for us and our world.

Plan now to explore with Katie and D.R. what a truly disruptive event the Advent of the incarnation is! Daub's book is available for \$13.99 plus shipping on Amazon, from \$10.24 on Alibris, and also from other booksellers.

The class will meet December 3, 10, 17 and January 7 and 14 from 8:45 – 9:30 in the Session Room on Sunday mornings. Assigned readings are:

December 3: Introduction ("Where's the Baby?") and Chapter 1 ("The End of the World as We Know It: Anticipating the Coming of Christ"), pp. 1-32

December 10: Chapter 2 ("Peace on Earth, Good Will to All: Faux Peace and Righteous Confrontation"), pp. 33-61

December 17: Chapter 3 ("Home for the Holidays: Finding Our Home in the Kingdom of God"), pp. 63-90

January 7: Chapter 4 ("Hidden in Plain Sight: Secrets and Revelations of the Messiah"), pp. 91-111

January 14: Chapter 5 ("The Cradle, the Cross, and the Gift of Emmanuel"), pp. 113-135

CHRISTIANITY NORTH OF MILLS AVE. AND SOUTH OF THE ROUNDHOUSE

This summer, during our church's renewal time, one of our especially intrepid members set off on the trail of how local churches far away from the part of town once known as Zion Hill respond to the call to worship God.

In summarizing his experience worshipping on 14 Sundays in a dozen churches, Richard Lindeborg points out ways in which these more recent churches within and beyond the city limits of Las Vegas differ from and are similar to our own historic church. He says most of these churches did not exist when he was growing up in Las Vegas.

Over the course of the summer, he experienced different ways congregations have of learning about and responding to God in worship—looking at worship through new lenses and perspectives, much as the rest of our congregation was doing in our Tracking the Word: Embodying the Spirit renewal programs.

His report to the congregation covers such things as how welcoming churches were, how their street presence, building access, overall facilities, and their orders of worship attracted members of their congregations to worship. He also noted their beliefs as much as was possible in a single visit.

He discovered that these churches were housed in attractive, modern buildings, featuring little in traditional architectural elements; that they ranged from a third our size to three times our size during the summer months; that most of them had much simpler, but longer, worship services than ours; and that most of them used as much or more technology than we do, both in their sanctuaries and in reaching beyond their walls.

He was surprised that most of the churches he visited spent very little energy criticizing the beliefs of other churches or criticizing the way churches in major denominations practice their religion.

Richard is willing to email this full report to anyone who is interested. Contact him at ralindeborg@cs.com.



Donate at

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2023/event/lasvegasnm> (the QR code will take you to the website!).

Checks made out to CWS/CROP can be sent to:

CROP Walk Treasurer

Pam Abreu

714 Myrtle Ave.

Las Vegas, NM 87701

Donations will be accepted through the end of November.



WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL RETREAT??

On Saturday, September 16, more than 20 FUPC members and friends gathered for a Congregational Retreat to discuss what our summer of “Tracking the Word: Embodying the Spirit” taught us. Response to the time of renewal was overwhelmingly positive, with our professional and local coaches and those congregation and community members who filled the pulpit getting high praise. What a blessing these folks were to our community!

Those gathered began by pondering what meaningful spiritual experiences DO. In a nutshell, the consensus was that such experiences:

- awaken our consciousness, capture our imagination, fill us with awe, and make the struggle of the journey worthwhile;
- cause us to struggle and to feel uncomfortable;
- help us find meaning in what we do in life and expose us to different ideas and understandings of spirituality;
- praise God and give thanks, both internally and externally;
- provide greater connection to others and to creation and encourage us to share our experiences and build up our neighbor.

With these things in mind, we participated in small groups to discuss ways in which we can continue to meaningfully experience God’s presence in our worship and community gatherings. A clear result of those discussions is that we experience meaning in music, with most groups suggesting more music in worship and opportunities to hear and participate in music outside worship. Other common suggestions included: continued opportunities to have “coaches” share with us; increased periods of silence during worship; continued use of the arts and other creative forms of worship; more opportunities to gather as a church family and in ecumenical gatherings; worship in other venues, such as outdoors or at the Old Town Mission Community Center.

We also had an opportunity to express what parts of our current order of worship are meaningful and what parts are not. Most parts of worship were deemed important by over 70% of respondents, including the welcome, prelude, opening hymn, reading of Scripture and the sermon, the anthem, Doxology, Lord’s Prayer, closing hymn, charge/benediction, and postlude. Slightly less important (between 50 and 70 percent deemed them important) were Minutes for Mission, Passing of the Peace, Call to Worship, Assurance of Pardon, and Prayers of the People. In response to this exercise, Pastor Katie and the Worship and Music Committee are introducing some changes to the order of worship. For instance, drastically fewer spoken opportunities are voiced. This practice was important when we were all online in the midst of and in the aftermath of COVID, but now that we have more ways to share these opportunities, taking time to speak them is not necessary. There are very mixed feelings about the Prayer for Reconciliation, so we are offering this prayer in a variety of ways—sometimes spoken in unison, sometimes sung, sometimes in silence, sometimes omitted. We will continue to try different approaches to the order of worship, always in keeping with our denomination’s guide for worship, which both mandates some parts of the worship service (chief among them, the reading and proclamation of God’s Word) and encourages variety and the recognition of Creation’s great diversity.

Please know that we want to hear your comments as we try new things and **we want your involvement!** If you can serve as a coach for a workshop on spirituality through an art, craft, or personal practice, please let us know that you are willing to do so! If someone you know in the community has something they might share through a workshop, please get contact information to us! If you would be willing to organize an event, whether it be a congregational gathering or some other special event, please let us know! The desire for us to offer such events is clear from the congregational retreat feedback, but we need YOU to step up to make them a reality as most of our volunteers are over-committed. If everyone who is not currently serving the church in another capacity stepped up and said, “I will organize one event” or “I am available to serve on one short-term project,” think how much we could accomplish!!

COFFEE WITH KATIE

Join Pastor Katie for Coffee with Katie every Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesdays at Charlie's.

Join her for good conversation and coffee, tea, pastries or breakfast!



ONLINE GIVING REMINDER

If you are using our online giving process, please check the “end date” of your automatic payments. And thanks for giving so generously this year. Contact the church office if you have any questions.



If you are not on the email distribution list for our Sunday Online Worship bulletin and would like to be, please send an email (fupc.nm@gmail.com) to the church office requesting that your name/email be added. The bulletin is emailed on Friday for the Sunday service.



TO JOIN ANY FUPC EVENTS VIA ZOOM



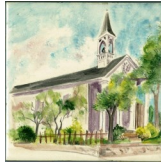
You are welcome and encouraged to worship in the sanctuary, but if you would like to continue worshipping online, here are the instructions to access Zoom:

- The easiest way to join worship or other FUPC public events is simply to go to our website (lvpresbyterian.org) and click on the “Join Us on Zoom” link.
- You can also pen your web browser and go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5739200081>. If you haven't been on Zoom before, you'll see instructions for downloading the Zoom app and allowing your camera (if you have one) and microphone to be used by Zoom, and then the meeting will open.
- If you are new to Zoom, we recommend going to the link above a few minutes before the event so that you can get the Zoom app set up ahead of time.
- If you don't have a computer but want **to join by phone, call 312-626-7699** and enter the meeting ID number (573-920-0081) when prompted. Please note this is a Chicago number, so if your phone plan does not have unlimited calls, you may incur long-distance charges.
- For Zoom committee meetings and other non-public meetings, you'll receive a link from your committee chair.

First United Presbyterian Church

NOVEMBER 2023

1000 Douglas Avenue
PO Box 37
Las Vegas NM 87701
505-425-7763



Website: www.lvpresbyterian.org

Facebook: Las Vegas First United Presbyterian (NM)

Email: fupc.nm@gmail.com

Sunday Schedule

9:00 a.m. - Bible Based Study in person and via Zoom

10:30 a.m. - Sunday Worship in person and via Zoom



November 6	Maridell Monnheimer
November 7	Christina Litherland
November 18	Nicky Litherland Theresa M. DeHerrera
November 27	Katie Palmer
November 30	Karen Topping