



Sharing the Love of Christ

First United Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

PO Box 37

1000 Douglas Avenue

Las Vegas New Mexico 87701

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

FEBRUARY 2020

It's a bit unusual, I suppose, but I'd like to share that I received many comments about my recent sermon, "Digging Through the Barriers." For those of you who didn't hear this sermon, it was a response to a lot of the brokenness and disease we are experiencing in our country, from the impeachment trial to growing issues surrounding immigration, health care, and others. My goal, as always, was to get out of the way so the Spirit could guide me. The result was to say that, just as the friends of the paralytic took him to Capernaum, dug through the roof, and lowered him into the room with Jesus because of their faith (Mark 2:1-12), we need to take our broken country and carry it with our faithful actions to healing. Following Jesus' lead, this means getting involved in politics. It means deciding what's right issue-by-issue rather than being led by party loyalty, feelings about a single issue, or biases with which we may struggle.

I expressed hope that we could agree that Jesus leads us to seek truth, love all of our neighbors (not just the ones that look and think like us), and ensure that all of God's children have food, shelter, and access to health care.

Among the comments I received, one person said that he'd always heard religion and politics don't mix, but he was rethinking that now. Others appreciated this hope that we could agree on these basic things and take action to live out Jesus' commandment that we love our neighbors. Another comment led me to write this particular newsletter article today: That sermon calls for follow-up.

In other words, in addition to my calling each of us to individually commit to political action that moves us closer to policies that demonstrate our love for our neighbor, perhaps we need to come together to discuss how we, as a faith community, can express that love.

Of course, several groups with which church members are affiliated are working in various ways toward this goal. The Understanding Immigration Task Force seeks, for its members, the understanding its name suggests and also to help educate community members and suggest action. So, too, Amnesty International and other groups. These groups are, of course, open to community members and speak for themselves. Our Mission and Peacemaking Committee members make awareness of many issues a priority and then offer us opportunities for education and action. We, as individual members of the church family, can choose how we respond.

But when I heard "that statement needs follow-up," I envisioned something different. Do we, as a faith community, need to pursue some kind of action together—not something we can take part in or not, but something for which we take a stand together? What would that look like?

As you know, I usually don't focus a "Pastor's Ponderings" on a sermon I've recently preached, but I have, indeed, been pondering the response to this particular one. Perhaps I've heard from everyone who felt compelled to say something. But perhaps there is need to "follow up." If you, too, think we need to pursue together as well as individually what we are experiencing in these times, let me know. We will plan a time to meet together—perhaps just to express what we're feeling, maybe to put a plan into action.

With Thanks for All of You,
Pastor Katie

Thank you for your prayers, well-wishes, cards, food deliveries, and love during my medical leave. Recovery was a little slower than I'd expected because of a little case of the flu that hit me just before the procedure, but I am now feeling much better, am gaining energy every day, and am eager to jump into a fabulous year of celebration as we say "Happy 150th Birthday, First United Pres!" —Pastor Katie

WORSHIP TIDBITS



Our weekly worship affords us not only the opportunity to come together to praise God, but also to celebrate God's gifts to us. This year, we are celebrating God's gift of 150 years as a church presence in our community. The 2020 Celebration Task Force has chosen as its vision for this year:

Seeds. Roots. Branches.

How wonderfully those three words encapsulate the goals of our faith community over the years. Planted through God's guidance as mission and "new town" churches, we took root and in turn planted seeds of faith, of justice, and of community until our branches spread in many directions.

In honor of our anniversary, this month's sermon series will focus on seeds (2/2), roots (2/9), branches (2/16), and growth (2/23). Let's celebrate together our 150 years of planting and growing and think together about the seeds we want to plant going forward.

AND NOW, FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

We're turning the traditional Lenten study on its head this year! Rather than studying spiritual disciplines or reading a book that leads us through Christ's passion, we'll be discussing a novel. It's an oldie (copyright 1991) but a goodie: Ann Tyler's *Saint Maybe*. The *Buffalo News* says this about *Saint Maybe* and its author:



Ann Tyler cuts through the monkey business straight to what is true and real in life. To open one of her books is to open an invitation—she leads you right through the front door, plumps you down on the sofa and surrounds you with her characters, ordinary people coping with the kind of extraordinary things you see every day... [S]he reaches another dimension in the tender exploration of humanity, and reinforces her place among America's best writers. . . With her distinctive blend of unforced philosophy, gentle humor and high farce, Tyler takes us into the life of Ian Bedloe as it is turned inside out. . . . The maturing of Ian Bedloe is one of Anne Tyler's most subtle designs."

As we become intimate observers of Ian's family dynamics and his participation in "The Church of the Second Chance," we'll have the opportunity to discuss family and kinship (how we hurt and how we support one another) as well as religion and faith.

The discussion group, led by Pastor Katie, will run March 1 – April 5. Watch the church bulletin and your email for details about availability of the book and cost. Before the first class, please read Chapter 1, "The Airmail Bowling Ball." And PLEASE, do not jeopardize the pace of our discussion or risk ruining another's reading experience by reading ahead and filling the class with spoilers. (I know; I know...when I get going on a novel, I tend to read it in just a few days. I ask you to commit to a new, deeper experience as part of your Lenten discipline!) Books will be available in the office after Feb. 11 at a cost of \$6.

INQUIRING MINDS...MEET ROGER

You may have noticed a small black disc with a flashing light on it perched on my stole over the last few months. That's Roger. Roger links directly with Karen Topping's hearing implant. Not only does Roger help Karen hear me better, but helps Karen's brain learn how to process what she is now able to hear with the help of the implant. Let's hear it for this technology!

CONGREGATIONAL RETREAT 2020!

PLAN NOW to join us at beautiful Ghost Ranch Sept. 18-20 for a Congregational Retreat!

In addition to spending lots of time in fellowship as a church family, we will welcome Rev. Brad Munroe, who serves as Presbytery Pastor to the de Cristo and Grand Canyon Presbyteries in Arizona. Brad will speak on *The Four Faces of Jesus' Great Commission*.

Brad says:

The Four Faces of Jesus' Great Commission will be a time to dig into Scripture with lots of laughter, discussion, music and prayer. We are blessed to be a blessing...AND the culture in which we worship and seek to serve is different than it used to be, with new changes coming every day. What does it mean to be a blessing in this time and place?

There is not a single, perfect, "Oh, now I get it," answer to this question, so we will have to dialogue and discern together how we are hearing God's call to us. To help with our discernment, *The Four Faces of Jesus' Great Commission* will brew a spiritual stew for our feasting:

Look at the different ways each of the Gospels shares Jesus' Great Commission

Hear stories from the life of St. Francis

- Wrestle with what it means to lean into Adaptive Change
- Discern our church's spiritual gifts through the lens of the Great Ends of the Church
- Discuss all of the above...together...with laughter, prayer and praise.

For information about registration and lodging, please see below.

SAVE THE DATE, PUT DOWN A DEPOSIT AND SAVE YOUR ROOM FOR

GHOST RANCH 2020 ALL CHURCH RETREAT

Sept. 18, 19, 20 we will be celebrating our 150th anniversary at an all church retreat at Ghost Ranch. A glorious time of year in a glorious place. Plan to come, retreat, learn, play and deepen our connection to each other. We arrive Friday afternoon, and leave after a worship service on Sunday mid morning. Five meals are included (2 dinners, 1 lunch and 2 breakfasts). There are two housing choices. Shared bath, bedroom on either side or dorm style, with walk to communal bathrooms.

Prices are \$60 per person for meals

Rooms with shared bath, \$135/night (various bed configurations)

Dorm \$85/night (various bed configurations)

The Session has decided to give a \$100 rebate to all who attend to help with expenses (from bequest monies). Sign up by making a \$50 deposit, mark "retreat" and put in offering or bring to office. Then go to Perea Hall and put your name on the Seeds, Roots, Branches tree and choose a room and sign it.

This will be a very exciting weekend, and all are welcome.

Questions, ask Judy Long, or Lisa Weinstein.



Sunday Morning Class Winds Up Its Study of Major Christian Beliefs



February offers a last chance to discuss major Christian beliefs with Rod Billingsley and the Bible-based class for youth and adults. Classes are at 9:30 Sunday mornings in the East Wing of the church.

The discussions based on the book *Christian Doctrine* (3rd edition) by Shirley C. Guthrie. As one reader commented, “[Guthrie] explores the various positions, offers thought-provoking ideas, and then leaves you to determine your thoughts and position.”

Reading Assignments for the February Classes:

- Feb. 2 Chapter 8 What Are We Doing Here? The Doctrine of Creation p 145
- Feb. 9 Chapter 10 Who Are We? The Doctrine of Human Beings p. 192
- Feb 16 Chapter 11 Why Don't You Just Be Yourself? The Doctrine of Sin p. 212
- Feb 23 Chapter 14 Who's in Charge Here? The Doctrine of the Resurrection p. 270

Come between 8:30 and 9 for Jump Start Breakfast in Perea (fellowship) Hall.

Please contact Richard Lindeborg or the church office if you want us to order a copy of *Christian Doctrine* for you. The cost is \$6.

“I Worried”

I worried a lot. Will the garden grow, will the rivers
flow in the right direction, will the earth turn
as it was taught, and if not how shall
I correct it?

Was I right, was I wrong, will I be forgiven,
can I do better?

Will I ever be able to sing, even the sparrows
can do it and I am, well,
hopeless.

Is my eyesight fading or am I just imagining it,
am I going to get rheumatism,
lockjaw, dementia?

Finally I saw that worrying had come to nothing.
And gave it up. And took my old body
and went out into the morning,
and sang.”

— Mary Oliver

Progressive Dinner

Join Community Life for a Progressive Dinner on Feb. 29. We will meet at the Halverson's at 4:30 for appetizers then progress to Perea Hall for the main course and then make our way to the Palmer's for dessert. There will be a sign-up sheet for each course in Perea Hall during the month of February.

What: Progressive dinner

When: February 29, 2020

Where: Three locations

Corky & Pat Halverson at 4:30pm

3510 Olivia Rd

Perea Hall at the Church

D.R. & Katie Palmer

1320 5th Street

Community Life meets the second Tuesday of the month 7:30 @ Charlie's

Lisa Weinstein- Chair

Jan Beurskens & Maridell Monnheimer- Secretary

Pam Abreu, Judy Long, Susan Apodaca

Old Town Community Center News



Activities for the next few months at OTMCC are in the planning stage. We are working with the SPOT team on setting dates for a minimum of two more Friday Night Fun events and another International Dinner. There is talk of a different format for the next Friday Night Fun. Whether or not that is the case it will surely be fun for youth and families alike.

JOT members are looking for new ideas to improve local outreach, program planning and publicity/social media. If you have ideas in those areas, please consider joining us either on the Team or with a limited scope sub-committee for specific events.

A couple of Team members have begun to work on improving the appearance of the wood floors at OTMCC. The first thing we are working on is removing tape that has been left on the floor for years. With the help of hair dryers, putty knives and elbow grease we are making progress. Those of us working on this project aren't physically able to put in more than two hours at a time so if you want to pitch in it's a short-term obligation.

We have begun discussions concerning how best to use the gift money we received at the end of 2019 from David Martin, one of whose ancestors was Rev. John Annin. A longtime concern has been making the West entrance more obvious, pleasing and safe. However, this may well be more costly than the gift. We will keep you apprised on what we decide.

Free Lunch, Anyone?

Come join us for good eats and fun!

WHAT
Casual Deacon Luncheon

WHEN?
Feb.6, and March 5

TIME?
12 Noon

WHERE
Perea Hall

WHO'S INVITED
Everyone

COST? - FREE

TRANSPORTATION?

Call your Deacon to arrange

Murl Baker 505-429-0670

Patrick Rucker 505-718-6211

Juli Salman 505-429-0290

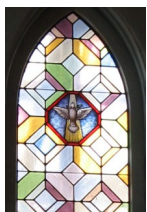
Bonnie Trujillo 505-425-3972

Sharon Vander Meer 505-617-0839

Mary Schipper 505-429-0285

Worship & Music A.K.A. (WAM)

Kudos to the following for all their help decorating the sanctuary for Advent: *Charlotte, Karyl, Beth, Mark, Kevin and Tom*. Helping take down ALL the decorations after Christmas were: *Corky, Charlotte, Karyl, Susan and Tom*. As my friend Del Turner used to say, "Many hands make light work." I am grateful for all the many hands that help WAM make worship more meaningful for us all.



If you have time on your hand that you don't know what to do with, please think about joining WAM. We meet the 1st Thursday of the month @ 9 a.m. in the Church library.

Lisa Weinstein- Chair, Tom Trigg- Secretary
Katie Palmer- Pastor, Karyl Lyne- Music director
Charlotte Wootton, Beth Urech

Time, Talents, and Treasure Committee Report

Stewardship Plan 2020

In 2019, the Committee had discussions, investigated alternatives, consulted with PC-USA representatives, and then had more discussions. Over the course multiple meetings in 2019, we felt we needed a change in our traditional method of fund raising. It needed to be more streamlined and more in tune with the modern world. It needed to be more effective in generating income to maintain our congregation and for us to carry out our Christ-driven mission to minister to all the Earth and to God's people, locally and around the world.

It seemed to us that the traditional method of pledge drives was no longer meeting the needs of the congregation. While the most obvious need the Committee had to address was the effectiveness of the program, there was another need. The Committee gradually became more and more aware that we wanted to foster a Culture of Generosity.

Generosity is certainly a good word to describe our congregation. The Committee felt that every day, opportunities arise for giving. We give to the church, to the local community, and to the people of God around the world. We contribute our time, talents, and treasure. These are all personal decisions, made in your heart. The Committee decided to pursue a program to put a little germ of generosity in the mind of each member of the congregation. That little germ of an idea, we hope, will pop out at odd times, and move each of us, in our own way and in our own time, to think about generosity and how to be generous.

Here at the church, the Committee decided upon a plan for the encouragement of generosity. We learned that many other Presbyterian congregations no longer use pledge drive results in their budgeting process. We discontinued the annual pledge drive and the related activities. No more pledge cards, no more Consecration Dinner. Instead, we would focus our activities on education. We will try to provide the congregation with information about what we are doing to follow the teachings of Jesus, and also, with information about how we are supporting those Christ-led activities.

- We must support open worship of God.
- We must support the spiritual needs of our church family.
- We must support the physical plant.
- We must support the personnel of the church.
- We must support our fine pastor. She not only gives the sermons, but devotes much time and energy to preparing them. She is Moderator of the Session, leading and inspiring us. She is knowledgeable and aware of the multiple activities of the church.
- We must support the mission of the church, the worship of God and the work of God.

All of these items are the foundation of what we, as a congregation, came together for in the first place. We came together 150 years ago, not as a social club or as a political organization, but we came together in John Annin's house to do the work of Jesus.

We need a church building. We need a pastor. We need the communal support and encouragement we each feel when we get together. We need those things so we can do more of a job and do a better job of preaching Jesus' message to the world.

The Committee will certainly tell you about the state of our finances, and can tell you, if you really want to know, how many rolls of paper towels we use in a year. We will tell you about the financial plan for support of our mission (our budget) and how we're doing as we follow the budget. We'll also tell you how the income, the giving, is doing. Of course we'll tell you that.

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150 years and counting

In 1870, the oldest New Mexico Protestant Church building standing today was erected on Socorro Street in Las Vegas, N.M. The original First Presbyterian Church was built by Rev. John Annin and his associate José Ynés Perea, later to become Rev. José Perea. A second church was built in 1880 in new town to attract members from a growing and thriving east side.



In 1960 the two church communities combined into the present First United Presbyterian church at 1000 Douglas Ave. This is something to celebrate: 150 years of serving church members and the community.

The 2020 Planning Committee continues to meet regularly to inspire celebration of our sesquicentennial. The launch of this 12-month campaign began with the lovely angel Light Parade float, which won second place in the judging. Plans are well underway for a fantastic community celebration on June 20 in Lincoln Park, an event open to the community.

The tree-planting project continues to develop. At our next meeting on Feb. 6 (Charlie's, 7:30 a.m.), Paul Stagner, a member of the city's Tree Board, will be our guest. We will discuss logistics and aim toward the goal of having an Interfaith Grove as part of Gallinas River Park. Yes, the plans are taking shape – which means they change shape from time-to-time – but the efforts are a reflection of what First United Presbyterian Church is: a collaborative community open to working with others to reach common goals.

As part of our year-long celebration, Community Life is planning an All-Church Retreat at Ghost Ranch. See more about that on page three. By the time you read this, our new website will be live. It is amazing to look at and is chock full of interesting information about our church and what we do locally, statewide and through mission support.

And let us not forget the new logo – Seeds. Roots. Branches. First United Presbyterian Church plants seeds of faith and service, takes root in our Presbyterian heritage and in the community through our involvement, and spreads branches of love and justice beyond our walls.

—D.R. Palmer, Chair

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More importantly, we will help you understand what we're doing to walk the path that Jesus showed us. Hasn't it been wonderful to hear the testimonials from the recipients of the Mustard Seed grants? Every time the Samaritan House compliments us on the quality of the meals our church provides, don't we know that we are helping our fellow Las Vegans? We have such an active congregation! We should take pride in what our congregation has been doing. It's not a sinful pride, but is the kind of pride that should be uplifting to our souls. We want each and every member of our church family to be open to the Spirit, in Sunday worship, and in our daily lives. Pay attention! If you see a need, it's the Spirit talking to you.

The Committee hopes this plan will result in plenty of income so that we can have plenty of support for the kinds of things we want to see done, here and there and everywhere. And if you have any ideas about the needs of God's people, then let's get going on it! Even the smallest project will have benefits far outreaching what you ever thought your idea might do.

Van Swan, TTT Chair

First United Presbyterian Church

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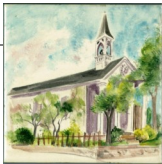
Sunday Schedule

8:30 a.m. - Jumpstart Breakfast:

9:30 a.m. - Bible Based Study

10:30 a.m. - Sunday Worship

Fellowship Hour following the worship service



FEBRUARY 2020



Deep and Wide

*A Contemplative Service at the
Old Town Mission*

5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays
at the Old Town Mission Church

This is an ecumenical gathering open to all,
sponsored by FUPC.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

3rd Charlotte Wooton
Pauline Dimsey
4th Allen Ayers
28th Claire Weinstein



Communion is offered each Sunday from October 6 through Pentecost (May 31, 2020) and on the first and third Sundays of each month from June through September. We do not celebrate Communion on the fifth Sunday of a month due to the addition of the Healing Liturgy to the service.



Samaritan House Food Donations

For February

Peanut Butter and Jelly

Coffee and Tea are always appreciated